

TLS

THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT

Important news for
New Subscribers

The surest, most convenient way to get the TLS each week is to take out a subscription. Our subscription service located at the address below will provide all subscribers quickly and regularly with their weekly copy of the paper, which offers an incomparable guide to new and recent books published all over the world. New subscribers are invited to begin here, by filling in the coupon below.

NEW SUBSCRIPTION RATES

The following postal zones are listed for your convenience. If your country is not included, please contact your local postal authority to ascertain your correct zone as specified by the British Post Office. United Kingdom only by surface mail.

6 months (26 issues) £12.50
12 months (52 issues) £25.00

British Postal Zone 'A' including Algeria, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates.
6 months (26 issues) £23.40
12 months (52 issues) £46.80

British Postal Zone 'B' including Argentina, Bermuda, Brazil, Hong Kong, India, Jamaica, Kenya, Malaysia, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, Singapore, South Africa, Trinidad and Tobago, Zambia, Zimbabwe.
6 months (26 issues) £28.52
12 months (52 issues) £57.04

British Postal Zone 'C' including Australia, China, Japan, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Taiwan.
6 months (26 issues) £29.12
12 months (52 issues) £58.24

Europe including Cyprus, Gibraltar, Malta.
6 months (26 issues) £20.80
12 months (52 issues) £41.60

USA and Canada by air
6 months (26 issues) US\$35.00
12 months (52 issues) US\$70.00

Please send me *The Times Literary Supplement*

☐ 6 months ☐ 12 months

Please print

NAME

ADDRESS

I enclose my cheque for made payable to Times Newspapers Ltd

Signature

Date

Return this coupon to Times Newspapers Ltd, Supplements Subscription Manager, Oakfield House, 35 Perryman Road, Haywards Heath, West Sussex RH16 5DH.

THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT

Priority House, St John's Lane, London EC1M 4BX
MAY 6 1983

Art 456	Literature 449
Bibliography 471-72	Military History 455
Biography 447-78	Natural History 466
Business 452	Performing Arts 470
Commentary 458-60	Philosophy 463
Economic History 462	Poetry 469
Fiction 457, 464-65	Politics 454
Greece 450	Psychoanalysis 451
Literary Criticism 467-68	Social History 453

INDEX OF BOOKS REVIEWED

BERTIN, CELIA	<i>Marie Bonaparte</i> [Paul Roazen]	451
BOUNEMER, AZZÉDINE	<i>Les Bandits de l'Atlas</i> [Francis Ghilès]	446
BOURGADE, PIERRE	<i>Les Serpents</i> [Francis Ghilès]	446
BROME, VINCENT	<i>Ernest Jones: Freud's alter ego</i> [Paul Roazen]	451
BROWN, ASHLEY, and CHENEY, FRANCES NEEL (Editors)	<i>The Poetry Reviews of Allen Tate 1924-1944</i> [Lachlan Mackinnon]	446
BUCKLER, WILLIAM E.	<i>On the Poetry of Matthew Arnold</i> [Miriam Allott]	446
CASTLE, CHARLES	<i>The Folies Bergère</i> [Margherita Laski]	446
CHAND, MEIRA	<i>The Bonsai Tree</i> [Nicole Irving]	446
CHAREP, MEHDI	<i>Le Théâtre d'Archi Ahmed</i> [James Kirkup]	446
CLARKE, A.F.N.	<i>Contact</i> [Richard West]	446
COATES, CLIVE	<i>Claret</i> [Janet Robinson]	446
COLLI, GIORGIO	<i>La Ragione errabonda: Quaderni postumi</i> [Leon Pompa]	446
COLWIN, LAURIE	<i>Family Happiness</i> [Victoria Rothschild]	446
DANFORTH, LORING M.	<i>The Death Rituals of Rural Greece</i> [Margaret Alexiou]	446
DEVEREUX, GEORGES	<i>Femme et Mythe</i> [Mary Leftkowitz]	446
DOUGLAS, COLIN	<i>A Cure for Living</i> [Christopher Hawtree]	446
EDWARDS, MICHAEL	<i>Back from the Brink</i> [R.J. Overy]	446
ELKANN, ALAIN	<i>Stella Oceanis</i> [Isabel Quigly]	446
EMERSON, SALLY	<i>Listeners</i> [Linda Taylor]	446
ENRIGHT, D.J. (Editor)	<i>The Oxford Book of Death</i> [Anthony Burgess]	446
FISHER, JAMES (Editor)	<i>Thorburn's Birds</i> [Redmond O'Hanlon]	446
FOX, JAMES	<i>Comeback: An actor's direction</i> [Michael Baker]	446
GILLISPIE, RICHARD	<i>Soldiers of Perón: Argentina's Montoneros</i> [Tulio Halperin-Donghi]	446
GREEN, EDWIN, and MOSS, MICHAEL	<i>A Business of National Importance: The Royal Mail Shipping Group 1902-1937</i> [P.N. Davies]	446
HAMILTON, IAN	<i>Robert Lowell: A Biography</i> [Alfred Kazin]	446
HEARD-BRY, FRAUKE	<i>From Trucial States to United Arab Emirates</i> [Malcolm Yapp]	446
HINES, JEROME	<i>Great Singers on Great Singing</i> [Alfred Alexander]	446
JOHNSON, FRIDOLF (Editor)	<i>Rockwell Kent: An anthology of his works</i> [Frances Spalding]	446
LACOMBS, ALAIN	<i>Des Compositeurs pour l'image</i> [Patrick O'Connor]	446
LE PICHON, YANN	<i>The World of Henri Rousseau</i> [Christopher Reid]	446
LORD, WALTER	<i>The Miracle of Dunkirk</i> [Brian Bond]	446
MAC, MAYNARD, and LORD, GEORGE DEFOREST (Editors)	<i>Poetic Traditions of the English Renaissance</i> [Ian Donaldson]	446
MACPHERSON, JAY	<i>The Spirit of Solitude: Conventions and continuities in late romance</i> [David Bromwich]	446
MATTHEWS, R. C. O., and others	<i>British Economic Growth 1856-1973</i> [Donald N. McCloskey]	446
MEAD, PETER	<i>The Eye in the Air: History of air observation and reconnaissance for the army 1783-1945</i> [Shelford Bidwell]	446
MENAKER, ESTHER	<i>Otto Rank: A rediscovered legacy</i> [Phyllis Grosskurth]	446
MÉTALLUS, JEAN	<i>La famille Vortex</i> [Robin Buss]	446
MOORE, KATHARINE	<i>Summer at the Haven</i> [Anne Duchêne]	446
MORRELL, JACK, and THACKERAY, ARNOLD	<i>Gentlemen of Science: Early years of the British Association for the Advancement of Science</i> [Gertrude Himmelfarb]	446
MUNRO, ALICE	<i>The Moons of Jupiter</i> [Alan Hollinghurst]	446
PATERSON, ALLEN	<i>The History of the Rose</i> [Christopher Lloyd]	446
ROSS, MAGGIE	<i>Milena</i> [L.T. Lyham]	446
RÓZSA, MIKLÓS	<i>Double Life</i> [Patrick O'Connor]	446
SANTINELLO, GIOVANNI (Editor)	<i>Storia delle storie generali della filosofia</i> [C.B. Schmitt]	446
SCOTT, DIANA	<i>Bread and Roses: An anthology of nineteenth- and twentieth-century poetry by women writers</i> [Tracey Warr]	446
SOUTHERN, JOHN	<i>Thorburn's Landscape: The major natural history paintings</i> [Redmond O'Hanlon]	446
STEVENSON, ANNE	<i>Minute by Glass Minute</i> [Carol Rumens]	446
STEWART, MICHAEL	<i>Monkey-shines</i> [Neville Shack]	446
TAYLOR, GORDON RATTRAY	<i>The Great Evolution Mystery</i> [John Durant]	446
WAKELIS, HELEN (Editor)	<i>The Maps and Text of the Book of Idography presented by Jean Rotz to Henry VIII now in the British Library</i> [Nicolas Barker]	446
WALSER, MARTIN	<i>The Swan Villa</i> [John Neves]	446
WEISS, THEODORE	<i>The Man from Porlock: Engagements, 1944-1981. Recoveries</i> [Clive Wilmer]	446
WELCH, DAVID	<i>Propaganda and the German Cinema 1933-1945</i> [Ian Kershaw]	446

COMMENTARY

Cinema	<i>Fanny and Alexander</i> [Lumière Cinema] [Richard Combs]
Television and Radio	<i>Bookshelf</i> (Radio 4): <i>The South Bank Show</i> (LWT) [Peter Kemp]
Theatre	<i>Shakespeare: Twelfth Night</i> (Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon) [Ann Pasternak Slater]
Reinholders	Eric Korn
Author	Author
Series	Series
Points	Points by Michael Hofmann, Frank Ormsby, Matt Simpson
Letters	Letters on: <i>The Battle of Britain</i> , <i>The Medical Inventory</i> , <i>Stefried Sassoon</i> , etc

BIOGRAPHY

IAN HAMILTON
Robert Lowell: A Biography
527pp. Faber. £12.50.
0 571 13045 3

To write about Robert Lowell is to enter a great disturbance. It was clever to assign Lowell's tumultuous story to a British poet-critic twenty-one years younger than his frenetic, all too fascinating subject and necessarily more objective and tactful than Lowell's friends, familiars and competitors at home. Lowell at the peak of his life - the period of *Life Studies* and *For The Union Dead* (1959 to 1964) - broke down regularly each year around Christmas. Under lithium the collapses became vaguer but frighteningly irregular. His extraordinary charisma more in sickness than in health continued to spellbind old friends, ex-wives, always new girl friends, a host of baffled but enthralled onlookers. I shudder to imagine an American biography of Lowell. I can all too easily imagine the flouting and backbiting by one of those "secondary" (as Lowell would have said) American poets who were so mesmerized by his tireless drama that Lowell's career and personality aroused emotions keener than any you find in their poems.

Lowell suffered from too many associations: his distinguished New England ancestry, his terrible mother and pitiful father, mentors like John Crowe Ransom, Allen Tate, Randall Jarrell, Elizabeth Bishop, adoring friends from boyhood on like Blair Clark and Peter Taylor, and of course the three talented and correspondingly intense writers he married - Jean Stafford, Elizabeth Hardwick, Caroline Blackwood. No American writer of my generation - and this in a literature ringing with complaints of "loneliness" and the frustrated search for "a usable past" - was more enamored in family, history, tradition, old loves, students and admirers, even when they did not all become new loves. Correspondingly, there emerged a public personage named "Cal": he was nicknamed by school fellows either after the tyrannical Caligula or the unclean Caliban - he was often both. Only "Cal" could have made a point of travelling with a contender for the presidency (Senator Eugene McCarthy) and fascinating him so thoroughly in the vital year of decision for Americans during the

Vietnam imbroglio, 1968, that the Senator sometimes forgot to campaign, then let it be known that he too was a poet. Among the poets only "Cal" was so familiar to readers who never met him, who didn't need to in order to gossip about him. Even before he laid his heart bare in the period that began with *Life Studies*, and that went on for eight books of purported confession until he wore out in 1977, he fascinated that extra-literary audience that now gathers to hear a poet whether or not it ever reads through a whole book of poems. When he died in a taxi on September 12, 1977, everyone soon knew, though the *New York Times* did not carry the full story, that Lowell had just flown in from Ireland and that he had left his third wife there to return to his second wife in New York.

His many associations gave an allusiveness, a density, an active weight to Lowell's poetry that were in striking contrast to the routine melancholy of so much academicized American poetry. Lowell's real debut came with his second volume, *Lord Weary's Castle* (1946); the unexpected force in these poems crackled along the hundred lines Lowell threw out to all that ancestral and literary New England he could claim as a family extension. He was also a hungry reader mad about "History"; the boy collector of toy soldiers grew up to collect, among other memorabilia of a savage age, anecdotes about the despots who always fascinated him. Nor was he ever afraid of what reading so many great novels could do to his poetry; he was a prose writer of extraordinary elegance, wit and mischief whose best poems show how much he was addicted to aristocratic prose.

All this "involvement" battered the man as much as it energized his poetry. The crowd in his life expected his tyrannical need to dominate into endlessly confusing personal attachments. Lowell himself became a "groupie" to and claimant of the famous. He sent regular bulletins about his health to T. S. Eliot, comfortably visited Ezra Pound in St Elizabeth's to sneer at the age. A net of allusiveness, fame and anxious name-dropping surrounded his poetry, and became something that this unstable but harshly proud American "patrician" lived in.

Lowell could easily have been spared the armed forces in 1943

The case-history of Cal

Alfred Kazin

because of his terrible eyesight. But by then he was a Catholic convert, and like Evelyn Waugh and Allen Tate ashamed of the Russian alliance. Before he went to jail for a year as a conscientious objector - his formal reason was that he was horrified by the bombing of civilians - he of course had to write to F.D.R. personally stating his objections to military service and recalling the distinguished record of his family. My own most jarring experience with him occurred in 1949 at Saratoga Springs, when he peremptorily demanded the instant dismissal of the executive director because he thought her too hospitable to the pro-Chinese journalist Agnes Smedley. He said he had a right to lecture the Yaddo trustees; his poetry had just been praised by George Santayana and Ezra Pound.

So much business on Lowell's part - personal, political, bookish, historical, ever gossiping about the great - got everyone else into his act. I was not surprised to read American reviews of his biography that chided Elizabeth Hardwick for being too long patient with her sick husband. This most confessional of poets had, in *The Dolphin* (a book about his love for Caroline Blackwood and dedicated to her), used, rearranged, "half-fictionalized" letters, telegrams and transatlantic phone-calls from Elizabeth Hardwick. This in turn invited idiotic reviews of *The Dolphin* that, on the basis of Lowell's mumbled and confused attachment to both wives, found a victim in the daughter Lowell had with Hardwick. Actually this false intimacy with Lowell was based on an over-valuation of Lowell's "confessional" tone. Eight "confessional" books notwithstanding, Lowell was never as shockingly personal as he thought he was. He was too well bred and by nature even more elusive than he knew. His style in its expert fluidity was not only catch-as-catch-can but really said "catch me if you can!"

Lowell's "involvement" was also outside the regionalism that was the basis of the Southern literary renaissance of the period just after the war. Ransom, Tate, Warren, Flannery O'Connor, Faulkner, Anne Sexton were not only the last hold-outs against American national power, but virtually the last true Southerners, a minority in their sense of the term. It is impossible to imagine a Truman Capote or a Tennessee Williams understanding, much less saying, what John Crowe

Ransom wrote fifty years ago in the famous "agrarian" manifesto, *I'll Take My Stand*:
If a community, or a section, or a race, or an age, is groaning under industrialism, and well aware that it is an evil dispensation, it must find the way to throw it off. . . . And if the whole community, section, race, or age thinks it cannot be done, then it has simply lost its political genius.
Lowell majored in classics at Kenyon, but he was hardly a dedicated Latinist like his Southern teachers. He became a Catholic, as Allen Tate did, but Tate was exceptionally ultra-montane among Southerners. After making his "manic protest" as a conscientious objector, Lowell quickly enough abandoned Catholicism - not only to divorce Jean Stafford, but because it had, as Stafford bitterly said, served its literary purpose. The Southerners surrounding Lowell were, with the exception of Elizabeth Hardwick from Kentucky, "conservatives" and even defiant reactionaries. Allen Tate said that Communism was just a ruse to let New York keep its ascendancy. Long after Texas represented the brazen new South to the rest of the country, "Fugitives" like Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren remained literary mythologists of the Confederacy even when they held distinguished professorships in the vile North.

The extraordinary post-war success of the United States, flushed with "victory", undamaged by the war, forgetful of the depressed 1930s, actually nationalized the South at last, especially in the era of television and of the oil and banking money that gave such reckless characters as Lyndon Johnson and George Wallace their chance. American life from the late 1940s through what Lowell called the "tranquilized fifties" to the anarchic 1960s and the still prosperous early 1970s was a heady time for the American intelligentsia. They were invited wholesale into the universities, foundations and think-tanks, and no

Pleasure, Preference and Value

Studies in Philosophical Aesthetics

edited by EVA SCHÄPER

These essays examine three themes: pleasure - its nature and role in the experience of art and beauty; preference - in aesthetic appraising, appreciating and judging; and value - aesthetic value in particular, and the status of value in general. As the themes interweave, the complexities of aesthetics bring into focus some of the central issues in the philosophy of mind.

Hard covers £17.50 net
Paperback £17.50 net

The Mesoamerican Indian Languages

JORGE A. SUAREZ

An original typological account of the various indigenous Indian languages spoken in Mesoamerica, together with a classification that takes into consideration the recent advances in knowledge. Much of the volume is concerned with the phonology, morphology and syntax of the languages but it also considers their cultural, social and political background.

Cambridge Language Surveys Hard covers £25.00 net
Paperback £9.50 net

Leo Spitzer: Essays on Seventeenth-Century French Literature

Edited by DAVID BELLOS

This completely new edition brings together for the first time in any language all of Leo Spitzer's work on the literature of seventeenth-century France, including essays on Racine's *Classical Drama*, Corneille's *Polysse* and the *Vie de Saint Alexis* and the 'Art of Transition' in La Fontaine.

Cambridge Studies in French Hard covers £27.50 net
Paperback £9.50 net

Studies in Numismatic Method

Presented to Philip Grierson

Edited by C. N. L. BROOKE, B. H. H. STEWART, J. G. POLLARD, and T. R. VOLK

The volume of essays, ranging in subject from Aale Minor in the seventh century B.C. to the nineteenth-century Genoese, demonstrates a wide variety of numismatic techniques, from the examination of archaeological evidence to the use of documentary sources relating to coin production and circulation.

£50.00 net

Catholics and Sultans

The Church and the Ottoman Empire, 1453-1923

CHARLES A. FRAZEE

A survey of the relations between Catholics outside and inside the Ottoman Empire, from the fall of Constantinople in 1453 and the Turkish invasion of Catholic domains to the formation of the Turkish Republic in 1923. Among the topics discussed are the French diplomatic activities in pursuing the role of protector of Ottoman Catholics and the foundation of Eastern Catholic churches.

£30.00 net

Henry Stubbe, Radical Protestantism and the Early Enlightenment

JAMES R. JACOB

This is the first biography of Henry Stubbe, classical, polemicist, mystic, philosopher and the most important critic of the early Royal Society. As well as forcing a reinterpretation of the controversy between Stubbe and the Royal Society, this study shows how the radical Protestantism of the 1640s and 1650s survived the Restoration to re-emerge in the form of radical Whiggery.

£18.50 net

Catholic Royalism in the Department of the Gard, 1814-1852

BRIAN FITZPATRICK

In early nineteenth-century France, the Catholic majority embraced royalism, while the large Protestant minority identified with the institutions and values of the Revolution. This study focuses on the Department of the Gard, in which prolonged political-inspired violence can be attributed to the ability of the counter-revolutionaries to emphasise the Protestantism of their opponents.

£26.00 net

Volkskapitalisme

Class, Capital and Ideology in the Development of Afrikaner Nationalism, 1834-1948

DAN O'MEARA

An analysis of the development of Afrikaner nationalism which challenges the common assumption that Apartheid conflicts with the colour-blind logic of capitalism. Far from being a monocultural movement of an ethnically mobilised group, Afrikaner nationalism emerged as an alliance of conflicting class forces during a period of capitalist accumulation and of transition from competitive to monopoly capitalism.

£22.50 net

Amílcar Cabral

Revolutionary Leadership and People's War

PATRICK CHABAL

A major scholarly biography, this book is an important contribution to the study of political leadership and to the analysis of the relationship between people's wars and revolutions. It is the first full-scale examination of the career of Amílcar Cabral who, as head of Guinea-Bissau's national movement, became one of Africa's foremost revolutionary leaders.

Hard covers £22.50 net
Paperback £9.95 net

African Studies Series 37

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

unendingly interesting to Lowell, Bellow, Mailer, Ellison. And this especially in an era when Americans celebrated their literary tradition as it, from Jonathan Edwards to Hemingway, it was all one and all their own.

What the post-war period did for Robert Lowell, with his trust fund, his fame, his unbelievable travels, his endless invitations from Harvard to Pudget Sound, Essex to Venezuela, was to lift him, quite literally, into space. America as Henry Adams' dynamo, the powerhouse supreme, energy without limit. So much power was naturally shocking to the sensitive, but for all their horror of Hiroshima, the Pentagon, mass communications, etc. etc. they rolled in an ongoing tradition. Behind *Lord Weary's Castle*, that "formalist" book, was such a pride in throbbing force as only Melville had invoked in the age of minimalist destiny.

A brackish reach of shoal off Madaket
The sea was still breaking violently and
night
Had steamed into our North Atlantic
fleet
When the drowned sailor clutched the drag-
net. Light
Flashed from his matted head and marbled
feet.

He grappled at the net
With the coiled, hardening muscles of his
thighs: ...
We weight the body, close
Its eyes and heave it seaward whence it
came,
Where the head-headed dogfish barks its
nose

On Ahab's void and forehead ...

The clotted effect of all this running-on was a signal of pride in so much ferocious detail. Invoking the despotic hero-villain-martyr of *Moby Dick* was another signal. America's literary past was at last at home in America, as Lowell celebrated it in his play, *The Old Glory*, which assembled Hawthorne's wonderful stories of Puritan Massachusetts and concluded triumphantly with Melville's extraordinary "Benito Cereno", about an innocently complacent American sea captain unable to understand, until it is almost too late, that the Spanish sea captain he wishes to assist is really the prisoner of the Negro slaves surrounding him.

Hamilton complains that *The Old Glory* is poor in language, not up to the Hawthorne and Melville texts. The point of the play was not to equal Hawthorne and Melville but to appropriate them for a contemporary text on American bloody-mindedness. In *Life Studies* Lowell, soon a liberal activist like so many American intellectuals of the period, sneered at the supposedly dumb and hapless Eisenhower:

ice, ice, our wheels no longer move.
Look, the fixed stars, all just alike
as lack-lustre atoms, split apart,
and the Republic summons like
the mausoleum in her heart.

Lowell's astonishing emergence in *Life Studies*, his first "personal" book, his best book, rebuts the typical Kennedyist lament of the 1960s - we must get the country moving again.

The country was moving all right, moving Robert Lowell into poem after poem about himself, his relatives, his women, his eventually self-

confounding existence between one wife and another. *Life Studies* had such unforgettable pieces as "Beyond The Alps", "A Mad Negro Soldier Confined At Munich", the superb prose memoir "91 Revere Street", the great poem from mental hospital "Waking In The Blue" - and among the best poems he ever wrote, "Memories of West Street and Lepke", and "Skunk Hour". The title poem in *For The Union Dead*, with its contrast of Boston's old idealists and dynamite breaking up the Common for parking spaces, still hits harder than any other American poem of the period. Yet all these poems are not so much moving as "impressive". The most important feature of Lowell's poetic line is its tricky grace, its need to surprise, its demonstrativeness. It is the poetry of a period when criticism was heralded not for its truth about art but for its own "performance".

With his genius for pastiches, Lowell performed all the time, and soon it did not matter if the poem was weak so long as the line was "strong". Poetry, as Coccauford is a separate language, and Lowell bubbled well in this language, especially when, moving into his mad and maddening life between America and England, second wife and third wife, Essex and Harvard, he reported that life altogether too fluently in unrhymed fourteen-liners, and actually became corrupted by his inability to write "badly". The fact is that he needed to conceal and to confuse some very primitive feelings. By nature he was a powerful, aggressive and altogether bossy person beset by manic depression and frightened even when, with his ventriloquist's skill, he wrote in a lordly voice alternating with a timid one. I shall never forget how on a crowded New York bus, surrounded by Columbia students, he impersonated first Thomas Hardy, then passages from *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. It was all barely conscious: this was a man who really lived in literature. Dissociation

lost that hopefulness. America finally exhausted him. His too many "confessional" books are "just personal", which Lowell in imagination and desire never was. Whether the sickness had its roots in what unthinking poets now call "the fall of America" is not easy to discern in Lowell's totally wretched last years. One finishes Ian Hamilton's biography with amazement that Lowell's chaos lasted as long as it did.

The mannerly romantic

Lachlan Mackinnon

ASHLEY BROWN and FRANCES NEEL
CHENEY (Editors)

The Poetry Reviews of Allen Tate
1924-1944

211pp. Louisiana State University
Press. £13.15.
0 8071 1057 4

In 1924, reviewing Edwin Arlington Robinson's *The Man Who Died Twice*, Allen Tate concluded by saying that "an unfavorable review" of any volume from Edwin Arlington Robinson would be highly disrespectful. It is the reviewer's business, he takes it to make only a provisional decision, a tentative classification of a new work. Finally is the office of criticism proper, as is also the discussion of a poet's spiritual and philosophical tendencies - a discussion that can be carried on only through reference to the poet's work as a whole. This retraction of what had hardly been favourable takes us to the centre of Tate's powers and limitations.

First, the mannerliness: Tate's feeling that he ought to be respectful is only an extreme case of an endemic gentleness which prevents his panning what ought to be panned. When he attempts to be hostile, his tone becomes ponderously ironic. Tate produces no one-liners, and if reviewing were solely a matter of *flair* he would never have survived. What gives his work its strength is his tone of central authority, a tone which abundantly exemplifies Eliot's remark that Tate had sustained the role of "sage". Tate's standard practice is to move from the specific instance to the predicament of modern culture with sometimes astonishing speed. Babbette Deutsch demonstrates "the intellectual honesty of a modern skeptic" with less than three paragraphs, and by the end of the review cultural categories have substituted her entirely. To those who are interested in what it is how the fashion to call the crisis in poetry, Miss Deutsch's *Epistle to Franz Kafka* will be an instructive text. This reversal, by which the reviewer's ideas become more interesting than the book

before him into separate identities that fortunate, he was able to capture in the thrilling discontinuities, line breaking against line, that are the secret of his resolute style. By breeding and education he was worldly, subtle, sly. Reading the last books - *Near The Ocean Handbook*, *For Lizzie and Harriet*, *History*, *The Dolphin*, and especially the very last, *Day By Day*, I easily tire of the unstoppable voice. No one needs to know so much about another's life, especially when this poet, flushed with "confession", is really determined to keep you guessing.

When Lowell was preparing *Life Studies*, a friend commented that "it seems never to have occurred to him that his personal history might not be of considerable public interest." Careful Elizabeth Bishop wrote, "I am green with envy of your assurance." So much self-exploitation, shocking as it became even to Americans, is in the national mode. For any of us to overlook its tie to what Lowell called "History", his unbelievably wide net of associations, is to miss the fact that Lowell the American saw the personal as "History", material for the famous epic or "great American novel" that Americans once wanted to write. Carlyle missed the point when he sneered that Whitman thought himself a big poet because he came from a big country. It was the perennial hopefulness of America, America "as promises", that nerved the best and worst writers to identify self as country.

Lowell in his accelerating sickness lost that hopefulness. America finally exhausted him. His too many "confessional" books are "just personal", which Lowell in imagination and desire never was. Whether the sickness had its roots in what unthinking poets now call "the fall of America" is not easy to discern in Lowell's totally wretched last years. One finishes Ian Hamilton's biography with amazement that Lowell's chaos lasted as long as it did.

in hand, characterizes Tate's reviews: it also adds to their dullness.

Obviously, it was not Tate's fault that much of what he had to review was bad, and though this book offers a useful conspectus of the dead American verse of its period it contains a number of major errors. Tate's response to the early *Cantos*, identifying their method as conversation, is deservedly well known. If unsurprisingly formalist in drift. Similarly, his review of *As I Wandered* is a remarkable essay which places Eliot's poem in the context of the poet's career and modern culture with thoughtful power. In his major pieces, though, Tate moves from what he regarded as criticism. Writers he admires - Eliot, Crane, Cummings, Millay, Phelps Putnam, Mark Van Doren - receive what is almost a running commentary, referring backwards through their work with a deliberately definitive intention.

Tate is characteristically intelligent about style. He recognized in Edith Sitwell's *Bucolic Comedies*, for instance, "a unique and distinguished mind; like Aubrey Beardsley, she creates a new world with a law of its own, a world of augury, mawkish brutality and the subtlest caricature." This kind of praise, which in Tate's literary history, but it can run to the self-parodying formula (in this case of Putnam) "ranks ... with the five or six interesting poets who have appeared in the present decade." Tate seems to have kept a mental league table which was rarely revealed in full and which shifted in number and duration without warning, his sharpness turning into a trivial mechanism.

However, Tate's insights are those of a period and a group. Although his tone is embittered and isolated - he can sound like a stylist in Manhattan - his preoccupations are recognizably those of the Fugitive-Agrarian group of writers, and it is here that his historical importance lies. In a note, to his *Selected Poems* (1970) Tate said that "By 'early' I mean a poem written before 1922, when I read T. S. Eliot's *Poems* (1920)." What Tate, Ransom and Warren, who represent this group, achieved was to give Eliot's



Robert Lowell and Elizabeth Bishop in Rio de Janeiro, 1962, from the book, reviewed here.

ideas about tradition, orthodoxy and culture a continuing American presence and identity (even if the ideas were separately reached). Indeed, Tate's obsessive ruminations about lack of cultural identity remind us how American Eliot was, but where Eliot extended his thought into a European context Tate remained defiantly provincial. One of the editors of this volume recalls strolling with Tate on the battlefield at Gettysburg, and there is a large part of Tate which never left: "the sunken fields of hemp, / Shiloh, Antietam, Malvern Hill, Bull Run". Tate's poetry looks increasingly brittle as it ages, because its grand manner connects with romantic remembrance rather than lived experience, and that central human void can now be seen to distinguish Tate from the rest of the group. Tate was a forerunner and which, as Tom Paulin has argued, itself foreshadowed the theoretical aridity of much academic work today.

What Tate's work crucially lacks is humour. In the elegiac piece, "The Last Omnibus", Tate said that "We could easily begin by beating Horace Gregory over the head with a stick called Ezra Pound. (I confess that my heart isn't in it, but what else can I do? It is one of our most recent conventions, 'placated' with varying degrees of brutality, vanity, and skill, by the younger men, e.g., Jarrell and Levin; and if there is anything better calculated to attract attention than the bad manners of a young man, it is the bad manners of an old man. ...) (Tate was forty-two at the time). What Tate fails to see in younger writers is the degree to which they depend on a present community. Jarrell's reviewing is unfailingly exciting because of its jokes but, like Clive James's work, is collusive in tone: the funny man needs to be on his audience's wavelength, and when Jarrell castigates a buffoon he does so in the knowledge that someone somewhere is laughing. The establishment of that literary community owed much to Tate's generation, but Tate never really understood it.

This can be seen from the last piece, the familiar introduction to Robert Lowell's *Land of Unlikeness* (neither a review nor hard to find, but a satisfying

talpiece). It is customary and right to admire Tate for his generosity to younger, greater poet, but it should be observed that Tate's influence on Lowell was a catastrophe. The verbalism and unreality of Lowell's early poems reflect a powerfully sensual mind lost in the historical abstractions Tate breathed. Lowell matured as he learned to play with ideas. Tate might inspire but he could not fertilize because the history he knew was imaginary, his good manners and weary resignation to the dress of his century cruelly remind us of Quentin Compson's father. It is important to remember that, sent *Life Studies* in manuscript, Tate was appalled. The poetry reviews collected here are the record of a distinguished career but not of a live imagination: it is good to have them, but their interest is more historical than might be hoped.

The 35th anniversary issue of the *Hudson Review* (Volume XXXV, number 1, Spring, 1980) contains poems by Louis Simpson, A. R. Ammons, Charles Rene Bates and Gail Mazur. Louis Rene Bates writes on "Embracing the Strategic Mythmakers" and Dana Gioia on "Business and Poetry". There is a short story, "Fifty-Seven Views of a Journey", by Guy Davenport and a "Fujyama" by Guy Davenport and a "Fujyama" by Guy Davenport and a "Fujyama" by Guy Davenport.

The Fall 1982 issue of *New Letters* (5346 Charlotte, Kansas City, Missouri 64110) contains an interview with Theodore Roethke which is taken from transcripts of recordings made in 1963. Theodore Roethke speaks "Poet". "The Teaching of Poetry" by Roger Rosenblatt. The review section includes Joseph Epstein's survey of some recent fiction, "Sex and the Single Novel".

D. J. ENRIGHT (Editor)

The Oxford Book of Death
351pp. Oxford University Press.
£9.50.
0 19 214129 5

"Solicitous friends" - if D. J. Enright may be permitted a personal note - "fearful that the 'depressing' nature of the undertaking might prove too much for the compiler's animal spirits. The reverse was the case. Or most of the time, for it must be admitted that certain areas - suicide, the death of children - call for more fortitude than others." What applies to the undertaker applies also to at least this client: the Enright death book is mostly very heartening and sometimes even hilarious. To look death and its concomitants squarely in the skull is to take away a lot of the nastiness. But, going through the contents, one wonders how squarely it has been possible to look at Henry James's distinguished thing: Graveyards and Funerals; Resurrections and Immortalities; Hereafter; Revenants; War, Plague and Persecution; Epitaphs - these indicate the scope of this thanatanthology. The section entitled "The Hour of Death" is what it says it is about - the hour rather than the instant, the area around the pinpoint of dissolution. Death itself cannot be dealt with from the inside, though in his *Time Must Have a Stop* Aldous Huxley had a valiant shot at it. And no literature, real or sub or letter to *The Times*, can help with the real trouble about dying, which is fighting for breath and losing, and leaving behind a body which discharges its excrements with abandon and makes death disgusting rather than ennobling.

The death of the world, which we have been expecting since 1945 and, to the disappointment of some, not getting, is not really what death is about, any more than gas-chamber statistics or the counting of battlefield corpses. Death is highly personal or highly familial. Our knowledge of death is usually given us first by our parents, which is mythically appropriate, since our primal parents are said to have invented it. Cats and dogs die and are buried in the garden, but the death of a father or mother is usually a major event seen at close quarters and highly traumatic. We expect to feel guilty, because we, the children, are being made room for, but we do not expect to feel disgusted. The desperate asthma, the rattle, the rictus are so mechanical and depersonalizing, and the collapse of the excretory system, with its aftermath of a ruined mattress waiting days for the garbage cart, is a sub-Rabelaisian joke in very bad taste.

None of that kind of death here, then. The hour of death can be a pretty long one and also pretty remote, far enough off for Yeats to start studying in a learned school till the time of the wreck of the body and for Jung to be reasonable about it. "It is just as neurotic in old age not to focus upon the goal of death as it is in youth to repress fantasies which have to do with the future." And Leopold, in his *Dialogue between Frederic Ruyssch and his Mummers*, makes Ruyssch say: "Then what is death, if it is not anguish?" and a mummy reply: "Rather pleasure than otherwise. Know that dying, like falling asleep, is not instantaneous but gradual." A mummy ought to know all about it, but one is not convinced. "The feeling I experienced was not very different from the satisfaction produced in men by the languor of sleep." Only one writer seems to come close to the reality as most of us imagine it, and that is Sir John Betjeman:

And shall I groan in dying
As I tried the twenty sheet?
Or gasp for breath unceasing
As I feel my senses drawn?
While the air is swimming with insects
And children play in the street.
I do not blame Enright for his avoidance of terminal asthma. It is to be cheerful if one can and cite Winston Churchill, on his seventy-fifth birthday, saying: "I am ready to meet my Maker. Whether my Maker is prepared for the ordeal of meeting me is another matter." Or give us Frances Cornford's "Epitaph for a Reviewer":

Whoso maintains that I am dead with
(Who wait the awful Day) is still a liar;
I hope to meet my Maker brow to brow
And find my own the higher.

Enright gets the painful stuff over early, following "The Hour of Death" with "Suicide". As I once had an attempted suicide in my family, I have been able to assess the practical utility of some of the great arguments against it, the best of which is probably Vernon Scannell's "Felo de Se": "I want to die. I'll hurt them yet", says the suicide, placing his head gently, like a pudding, in the oven."

The lamplight darkness roared inside his head.
Then sighed into a silence in which played
The grown-up voices, still up late,
Indifferent to his rage as to his fate.
As for the existentialist view that suicide is the ultimate act of free choice, Cesare Pavese - who eventually nevertheless did the deed - advises putting off the decision, "feeling (or hoping) that one more day, one more hour of life, might also prove an opportunity of asserting one's freedom of choice, which we should lose by seeking death." But, just to both sides, Enright gives us the most harrowing and articulate suicide note ever, one to which it is hard to apply an answer, written by Bridget and Richard Smith, fallen and debt-ridden bookbinder. The husband and wife not only killed themselves but their two-year-old daughter. The year was 1732, and the style shows it:

We apprehend the taking of our child's life away to be a circumstance for which we shall be generally condemned; but for our own parts we are perfectly easy on that head. We are satisfied it is less cruelty to take the child with us, even supposing a state of annihilation as some dream of, than to leave her friendless in the world, exposed to ignorance and misery.

The rational tone has a curious resemblance to that of the Declaration of Independence. God, framer of the glorious universe, is expected to be rational, meaning reasonable, meaning humane. Some of us feel that there is nothing beyond God, Old Nobodaddy rather, and the suicide's hell must be to him a highly just terminus, especially if compounded with infanticide. Hamlet's soliloquy, rightly here and seen rather freshly in this context, is everybody's interior monologue on the theme. The inevitable chunk from *Jude the Obscure* is here too ("Dione because we are too merry" - would it be less harrowing if correctly spelled?) and Virginia Woolf's farewell to Leonard. The option remains open, but there is a cheating kind of suicide for which Enright might have looked for illustrations - the kind proposed to Eliot's murderers in the cathedral, for example, and, perhaps not so well recorded in literature, the sacrificial visit to Belfast or New York's subway late at night.

The value of a good anthology, whatever the unifying subject, must be its provision of texts previously unknown to the reader. In the section on mourning, which admits both solemnity and satire, there is a fine passage from a dialogue written by Henry Mayhew, or perhaps merely collected by him, in *The Shops and Companies of London* (1865):

Lady: ... I suppose you have a great variety of half-mourning? Shopman: - Oh! infinite - the largest stock in town. Full, and half, and quarter, and half-quarter, shaded off; I may say so, like an India-ink drawing, from a grief pronounced to the slightest nuance of regret.

We have also "Graveyards and Funerals" but, regrettably, no wakes, unless Jilly Cooper may be regarded as providing one with the Grates of Australian burgundy discovered under the stairs after her grandmother-in-law's funeral. "A rip-roaring party ensued and soon a lower middle busybody ... came bustling over to see if anything was wrong. Whereupon my father-in-law, holding a glass and seeing her coming up the path, uttered the immortal line: 'Who is this intruding on our grief?'"

Intimations of mortality

Anthony Burgess

And perhaps there is not quite enough of the death taboo which has replaced the sex one and is dead with so fully in Philippe Ariès's *The Hour of Our Death*. There are passages from Jessica Mitford's *The American Way of Death* and a brief paragraph from Evelyn Waugh's essay "Half in Love with Easeful Death", but nothing from *The Loved One*, the only genuine piece of thanatographic fiction we have. The section on animal deaths could have profited from an extract from dealing with The Happier Hunting Ground.

The buglers blowing taps over a canary's grave are better than Brautigan's discovery in "Here Lies a Twister/Wrapped in a Glass of Milk" and probably not less genuine. Dogs do sentimentally best here, but Hal Summers's poem "My Old Cat" is the most moving, with the creature meeting death in pure hate: "Well died, my old cat". Philip Larkin's "Take One Home for the Kiddies", with its final "Mam, we're playing funerals now", is revealed as a small classic on a par with Ralph Hodgson's "Stupidity Street", which, like the one about ringing the bells of heaven and the wretched blind pit ponies and little hunted hares, does not bear too grave or Gravesian a scrutiny but one would not be without.

The section about death and children could have been painful, but Enright wisely extends his brief beyond the expected and deals with what children think about death, quoting, for instance, Freud: "I was astonished to hear a highly intelligent boy of ten remark after the sudden death of his father: 'I know father's dead, but what I can't understand is why he doesn't come home to supper.'" There is also John Crowe Ransom's fine poem "Janet Waking", which dares sentimentality and achieves high dignity. Dickens is not allowed much of

a look in: he gets away with a brief visit to the cemetery in *The Old Curiosity Shop* and no more. "Every time an earth mother smiles over the birth of a child, a spirit mother weeps over the loss of a child." If that were J. M. Barrie we would be nauseated; it happens to be an Ashanti saying so it must be all right.

Enright saves the larger hilarity for the end with "Epitaphs, Requiem and Last Words". Nigel Dennis, in an *Encounter* article (November 1961), was very doubtful about the authenticity of famous last words, what with Rabelais being credited with five utterances and Heine with three, all too good to be true. A doctor apparently told Mr Dennis that he had attended 500 deathbeds without hearing any memorable final line.

Most patients confront their Maker doped, anyway, drawing from Dennis the comment that "Just as the pneumatic tyre has driven the straw from the street of the dying, so has the hypodermic silenced the householder." However, James Thurber is here saying "God bless God damn", and Ralph Vaughan Williams with his "in the next world I shan't be doing music, with all the striving and disappointments. I shall be being it." He said this a fortnight before his death, but it is too good to leave out. Of the epitaphs, most are very well known but none could properly be omitted. What is omitted is the pseudo-Homeric one on Margites - "Him the gods had made neither a digger nor a ploughman nor otherwise in aught, for he failed in every art." I would like this for myself. While I am being personal I may as well offer my father's dying words, which I heard clearly: "Bugger the priest. Give me a pint of draught Bass."

Much work has gone into this compilation, and the individual introductions to the component sections are, as we would expect,

elegant, modest and very wise. Death is a difficult subject because it is a negation. "To talk at all interestingly about death", says the compiler, "is inevitably to talk about life." True, because death is the limit of life which defines what life may contain. And what brings death about is contained in life, indeed may be regarded as life itself. The antonym of death is not life but birth, and I wonder whether an *Oxford Book of Birth* will ever appear. I should imagine it would be slim and highly sentimental.

There are two final points to make, neither of them relevant to the other except in so far as they relate to this anthology. One is that, after Shakespeare, Dr Johnson is the most cited author, as he is, without that qualification, in John Gross's recently published *Oxford Book of Aphorisms*. Johnson's approach to death comes closest to that of the average man who was brought up in a faith with an eschatology - sensible about the uselessness of grief, for example, and occasionally hysterical about the judgment (the hysteria, one might suggest, of the guilty masturbator). The other point is that death is becoming, as it rarely was in the past, a thing to worry about in terms of finance. There is an interesting *Times* correspondence here about the cost of coffins, which is perpetually rising, the necessity of buying one well in advance of likely use, and the difficulty of hoarding one in a small flat (one correspondent suggests using it as a cocktail cabinet or, better, buying a grandfather clock instead). People are also frightened of dying these days because of the financial mess their relics are likely to be in. For the first time in history one has to worry whether one can afford death as one can afford a new refrigerator. One can, however, afford this book and one ought to buy it as one of the liveliest publications of the half-year.

Announcing

NOTEBOOKS IN CULTURAL ANALYSIS

A new annual review for the discussion of cultural structure and change in all their manifestations.

Notebooks welcomes submissions of 25-100 typescript pages in length. The first volume will be published in 1984 by Duke University Press.

Editor: Norman F. Cantor, New York University.

Address all inquiries and contributions to: Nathalia King, Managing Editor, Institute for Cultural Analysis, 113 University Place, New York, N.Y. 10003, (212) 598-3736.

LIBRAIRIE DROZ

Leading scholarly publications in the following fields:

- French literature
- Renaissance and Humanism
- History
- Art History
- Law, Economics and Sociology
- Linguistics

ASK FOR OUR FREE CATALOGUE.

Please send me your complete catalogue

Name _____

Address _____

To be sent to:
LIBRAIRIE DROZ
C.P. 389
CH-1211 Geneva 12

In the driving seat

R. J. Overy

MICHAEL EDWARDS

Back from the Brink: An Apocalyptic Experience 301pp. Collins. £9.95. 0 00 217074 4

This is a remarkable book, telling a remarkable story. It is also, as its author clearly intended, a very moral tale, an entrepreneurial Pilgrim's Progress. The whole book, with some justification, is permeated by an unremitting self-righteousness.

No-one would accuse Michael Edwards of not practising what he preaches. He was the thrusting, successful, hard-working Chloride executive who in 1977 was asked to take over the unenviable task of saving an ailing British Leyland. Years of poor investment decisions, slack management, excessive centralization, poor labour relations had left BL the weakest of the large European car firms. In 1975 Labour took it over. Two years later things were as bad as ever. Edwards was the fourth chairman in twenty months. The organization was torn with strikes. Product planning was in disarray. The vast corporate structure was stifled by inertia and demoralization. In five years he succeeded in transforming BL. Its products are more reliable and imaginative, its economic performance is better, its factory efficiency second to none in Europe. It would be undesirable not to ascribe a large part of the credit for this turn-round to BL's forthright new chairman.

How this transformation was carried out is the subject-matter of these detailed, well-crafted memoirs. Their author has a simple explanation. It is people that matter. If you have the right man in the right job, if managers can actually manage, if morale is high in the work-force, then no problem is too big to cope with. Here is someone who believed firmly that economic circumstances are shaped by men, and not the other way round. It is no surprise to learn that the first major change under Edwards's stewardship was a complete shake-up of BL management. Hundreds of senior men were "asked to resign" or were redeployed. All managers were subjected to a series of aptitude tests and those found wanting were kicked out. New blood was brought in and the

managerial style of BL changed dramatically. The organization was decentralized so that responsibility and authority could be restored at factory level. Managers stopped making concessions and, on Edwards's own example, confronted the work-force with the reality of the corporate power-structure. It was management, not unions, that had the power to close down BL between 1977 and 1982. If Edwards is to be believed that is precisely what would have happened if the work-force had not come to its senses, rejected shop-steward extremism and voted overwhelmingly, time and time again, for a return to work or for acceptance of management plans to change work practices and streamline the corporation.

The evidence certainly suggests that if your criterion is economic efficiency then the strategy of enforcing managerial control and attacking political extremism is a very effective one. The sacking of Derek Robinson, the Communist shop-steward at Longbridge, was just one of a series of head-on collisions with the trade union movement which were all won by management. By 1980 enough progress had been achieved to make a clean slate of all traditional and customary work practices that had been conceded to labour for the past thirty years. Factories were closed down, thousands of places were cut from the labour force, pay was pegged to what the company could afford in order to remain competitive, collaboration with the unions was replaced by direct appeal to the workers through secret, company-wide ballots. The result was a sharp falling-off in strike activity, much higher levels of productivity, and, according to this account, a greater degree of co-operation between the two sides.

None of this would have been possible, of course, without the willingness of the government to continue to pump vast funds into BL to carry out a far-reaching modernization programme. The fact that BL was publicly owned pushed Edwards, whether he wanted it or not, into the political arena. Though he confesses that businessmen and politicians are "generally not on the same wavelength", there is no doubt that his own enjoys political life and is good at it. This book should dispel once and for all the idea that businessmen are in any sense "neutral" or "apolitical". For five years the author has steered an uneven and difficult course between

civil servants, ministers, union leaders and politicians of every rank and persuasion. Some of his judgments make interesting reading: the tortured Keith Joseph wrestling with his conscience over funding public enterprise ("he is one of those people it is always a pleasure to do business with. I trust him"); Alan Walters, advising closure of BL to teach the working class a lesson; Margaret Thatcher's formidable working lunches ("Now what's all this about Michael? You're not going to ask us for more money?"); and Tony Benn, who first approved Edwards's place on the NEB ("I had no sooner joined him at his coffee table than he exposed his political philosophy in one sentence... Each year I have transcribed it into my engagement diary just in case I should forget how centralist he really is!").

In all this Edwards sees himself as part of a wider and much more important political struggle, the conflict between liberal individualism

and the satanic forces of the far left. His hardy South African upbringing partly explains this: "I wasn't spoonfed... I was encouraged to get on with things. You make your own mistakes and you correct them yourself". He has brought these values openly to his role in management. He accepted a place on the NEB in order to infiltrate a socialist organization on behalf of private enterprise. He confesses here that his aim at BL has always been "to return it to the private sector" once enough taxpayers' money had been used to make it profitable again. Once in the hot seat at BL he relates how he defeated one Communist plot after another to destroy the company, to spread anarchy, chaos and demoralization ("their bread and butter") in order to speed up the revolution. Good workers are those who ignore their union representatives and do what management tells them to do. There is very little sense in this book of the fear, despondency and anger that many workers feel at sudden

changes in traditional work practices, at the threat of unemployment, at constant harassment because of their political views. These are ordinary workers: there are very few Leans or Longbrides.

Though Michael Edwards has won left BL his spirit lingers on. It has taken Cowley two years longer (and a much rarer strike) to accept the changes forced upon Longbridge, but there too the work-force has been less than uncompromising managerial determination to manage. The victory for management at Cowley is the last of Edwards's consistent intention to bring about a major shift in industrial power back towards the bosses.

To be fair, Edwards was as hard on the managers as he was on the workers. His success story is a message for them as much as for the workers. "Management", he writes, "is not an automatic right, it has to be earned. It is a duty. If there is a moral in this industrial saga this is surely it."

Holes below the water line

P. N. Davies

EDWIN GREEN and MICHAEL MOSS

A Business of National Importance: The Royal Mail Shipping Group 1902-1937

291pp. Methuen. £15. 0 416 32220 4

The collapse of the Royal Mail Shipping Group was a disaster which had ramifications far beyond the shipping and shipbuilding industries. What was probably the biggest commercial bankruptcy ever recorded in the UK - net losses of £50 million at 1931 prices - had a highly significant impact on the stock market, on company law and on the accountancy profession, and as it was feared that it might lead to a loss of overseas confidence in Britain at a critical period it provided the first occasion when the Treasury and the Bank of England were obliged to join the City in a major rescue operation. The event was also marked by the successful criminal prosecution of an eminent member of the aristocracy; so, at the time, public interest was particularly intense.

In spite of their sensational nature, little has been published about these happenings and the affair has been largely forgotten. There are a few references in financial commentaries and various company histories, and biographies help to fill out the information provided in *The Royal Mail Case* (1933) edited by Colin Brooks. The present reviewer discovered this serious omission when Elder Dempster Line - a major constituent of the Royal Mail Group - in 1972, and subsequently published two articles, one on Lord Kylsant and another on the Phillips family. But with these exceptions the volume under review provides the sole guide to the rise and fall of this great enterprise.

The Royal Mail Steam Packet Company was one of Britain's most prestigious shipping lines. By 1902 it had become moribund. It was then taken over by Owen Cosby Phillips (Lord Kylsant) and his elder brother, John (Viscount St Davids). Although the Phillips family had little in the way of fortune, John had married well and the combination of his wife's capital and his own ability meant that he was eventually to control no fewer than twelve investment trusts. At this time Oswald was engaged in operating a small tramp-ship company so it was largely through his brother's influence that he became Chairman of Royal Mail. However, under his guidance, over the following twenty-five years, the company became a group which at its peak was responsible for about 14 per cent of the entire British mercantile marine.

Kylsant organized his companies with a high level of genius. This ensured his continued control but he realized that it would not be regarded

with favour by the public, on whom he was dependent for vast amounts of capital. Accordingly he disguised the true structure of the group by an intricate system of cross-shareholdings which proved to be so effective that it was always quoted as a sound investment. However the replacement of the hundred vessels lost during the First World War placed the Royal Mail heavily in debt and the decline in trade and freight rates meant that it operated at a loss throughout the 1920s.

Kylsant chose to conceal the real situation and the truth only emerged when, in 1929, he was unable to repay part of a loan received under the Trade Facilities Acts. He was forced to leave the UK - net losses of £50 million at 1931 prices - had a highly significant impact on the stock market, on company law and on the accountancy profession, and as it was feared that it might lead to a loss of overseas confidence in Britain at a critical period it provided the first occasion when the Treasury and the Bank of England were obliged to join the City in a major rescue operation. The event was also marked by the successful criminal prosecution of an eminent member of the aristocracy; so, at the time, public interest was particularly intense.

Viscount St Davids's co-operation with his brother had declined as each had become immersed in his own affairs, but they remained friendly until 1921. A political rift then developed and both abandoned their Liberal ideals - John moving to the left and Owen to the right. Thereafter they never met and when, at a vital stage, John resigned as trustee of Royal Mail's debenture holders, Owen regarded his action as "a stab in the back" and never forgave him.

Edwin Green and Michael Moss have taken every advantage of their

respective positions as archivists with the Midland Bank and Glasgow University to gain access to a wide variety of original sources. They have then used this material so that the growth of the group, together with the appropriate family and commercial background, is clearly described, although their style may occasionally leave the reader somewhat breathless. The section which provides an account of the relationship between the "Voting Trustees", the Bank of England and the Treasury during the process of unscrambling and reconstruction is particularly well done.

However, the authors' touch is sure as economists than as historians and their analysis does not always appear to give the correct emphasis to the relevant factors. Thus there is a real explanation for the disaster between the two Phillips brothers in spite of the fact that this may have been the biggest single factor in Kylsant's ultimate failure to face up to his problems. The greatest of these, the illiquidity caused by the re-equipping of the fleet with overpriced vessels after the First World War, is hardly given the attention it deserves and his reluctance to rationalize the activities of his companies or even provide adequate central control is largely ignored.

Any attempt to do justice to such diversity and complexity will require several volumes rather than the 215 pages of text we have here. However, Green and Moss have used their limited space to good effect and many, though not all, of the mysteries of the Royal Mail crash have at last been exposed.

Arts Council OF GREAT BRITAIN

Writers' Bursaries and Travel Grants 1983/84

The Arts Council intends to award a limited number of bursaries and travel grants during 1983/84 to poets, novelists and writers of non-fiction, whose work is of outstanding literary quality and who have had at least one book published. Writers of non-fiction works of literary merit are particularly encouraged to apply.

The bursaries will be given to finance a period of concentrated work on a specific book (including research). The value of the awards will vary according to the individual circumstances of each recipient and the length of time needed. Applications for travel grants will be considered from non-fiction writers who need to travel for research purposes; and from writers of fiction and poetry who intend to undertake some foreign travel to benefit their work. These schemes are open to writers who are resident in England and who write in English.

Nominations of suitable candidates are invited from sponsors such as publishers, editors, literary agents or other writers. Further details and application forms are available from the Literature Department, Arts Council of Great Britain, 9 Long Acre, London WC2E 9LH. Tel: 01-378 6597.

The closing date for applications is 30th June, 1983.

Birth of an establishment

Gertrude Himmelfarb

JACK MORRELL and ARNOLD THACKRAY

Gentlemen of Science: Early Years of the British Association for the Advancement of Science 592pp. Oxford University Press. Paperback, £7.95. 0 19 520396 8

In the annals of popular science, the British Association for the Advancement of Science is memorialized by the exchange between Bishop Wilberforce and T. H. Huxley in 1860, in which Wilberforce asked Huxley whether it was from his grandfather or grandmother that he claimed descent from a monkey. It is Huxley's reply (in one version or another) that is always quoted: there is nothing shameful in descent from an ape but there is from "a man of restless versatile intellect, who, not content with an equivocal success in his own sphere of activity, plunges into scientific questions with which he has no real acquaintance, only to obscure them by an aimless rhetoric, and distract the attention of his hearers from the real point at issue by eloquent digressions and skilled appeals to religious prejudice."

If Wilberforce obscured the real issue of Darwinism, Huxley's reply has obscured some of the more interesting circumstances of that meeting. It opened with a paper by an American, John William Draper, arguing that just as the progression of species was determined by immutable law, so was the intellectual progression of mankind. In the discussion that followed an economist disputed Darwin's theory on religious grounds, a clergyman did the same, and one speaker provided a mathematical defence of it complete with diagrams on the blackboard. After the Wilberforce-Huxley skirmish others entered the lists: an Oxford don challenged the idea of evolution by pointing out that Homer had lived three thousand years ago and his like had not been seen since; a young naturalist accused Darwin's critics of resorting to fraud to discredit him (he himself had sent a specimen of wheat ostensibly from an Egyptian mummy, which turned out to be made of French chocolate); Darwin's old commander on the Beagle, holding up an immense Bible, adjured the audience to follow divine revelation rather than human conjecture; and a distinguished botanist explained why he himself had been converted to the new theory, during most of these proceedings, the students in the audience, with a nice impartiality, shouted down speakers on both sides, while a crowd of women waved their handkerchiefs in support of the Bishop. (One woman fainted and had to be carried out, overcome, perhaps, more by the heat in the crowded room than by the excitement.)

The episode is full of curiosities. What were 700 people doing at a meeting of the Zoological Section of the British Association for the Advancement of Science? Why was the principal paper on a subject of intellectual history (and by a not very reputable historian)? Why did an economist, a mathematician, a naval officer, and assorted scientists and clergymen feel competent to discuss Darwin's theory, published only the year before? How did it come about that the Anglican Bishop of Oxford was a vice-president of the British Association and thus a natural participant in the debate? What were so many students doing in Oxford during vacation time, what were so many women doing there at any time, and what were they both doing at a scientific meeting? Why were the proceedings so lacking in the gravity, even pindry, one might expect in a learned society?

Gentlemen of Science, by Jack Morrell and Arnold Thackray, goes far towards answering these questions, and a good many others we may not have thought to ask. Although it deals only with the formative years of the British Association, 1831 to 1844, it has obvious implications for the later years as well, and, more important, for the culture which science was so widely diffused and so heatedly engaged. A

massive work of scholarship drawing upon dozens of collections of manuscripts never before used, including the records of the Association and the letters of its founding fathers (most notably those of William Vernon Harcourt), it is a comprehensive account of a scientific establishment in the process of formation and in the achievement of public recognition.

The twenty-three "gentlemen of science" identified as the founders and leaders of the British Association were predominantly Anglican; many were ordained or the sons of the clergy; most were of the liberal Anglican or Broad Church party. They were also predominantly Whigs, as moderate and mellorist in politics as in religion. All except five were university educated, with a disproportionate number coming from Trinity College, Cambridge, and a smaller contingent from Trinity College, Dublin; as many as thirteen held university chairs. (In part this reflected the increase in the number of professorships, especially in the sciences, in the early decades of the century.) Of the remaining ten, eight were essentially men of leisure (including three with Church sinecures), and only two "depended on entrepreneurial science for their livelihoods" (but of these one was an editor and writer who was knighted the very year the Association was founded and later became the principal of a college, and the other was a teacher). Almost all were prominent in their scientific societies as well; by 1844 they held the presidencies of no fewer than seven societies, including the Royal Society of London, and served on countless boards and councils.

These "gentlemen of science", then, were truly gentlemen, their interest in science unalloyed by any utilitarian interest. Morrell and Thackray describe them as a "scientific clergy", a term echoing the "national clergy" described by Coleridge in 1830 in his *On the Constitution of Church and State*. Coleridge's clergy, to be sure, was primarily religious and humanitarian rather than scientific. But the founding fathers of the British Association would not have quarrelled with his conception of religion as "the centre of gravity in a realm" still less with his assertion that "science and especially moral science, will lead to religion and remain blended with it". In associating themselves for the "advancement of science", they did not mean to challenge the preeminence of religion; for them the advancement of science could only contribute to the advancement of religion - "properly understood", as Tocqueville would have said. Moreover, Coleridge himself did not confine his clergy to men of the cloth; on the contrary, he explicitly included men of science among those who were to give intellectual and moral direction to the nation, thus ensuring the "permanent" and "progressive" interests of civilization.

Coleridge had distinguished between the "fountain heads of the humanities" who presided over the clergy and were charged with cultivating and enlarging the domain of the intellect, and the larger body of the clergy who were distributed throughout the country so that no part was without its "resident" guide, guardian, and instructor. Morrell and Thackray find the same distinction in the British Association, where the leadership was vested in these distinguished gentlemen, while the rank and file was made up of men of lesser social status and public renown - a lesser clergy, so to speak. And Coleridge's injunction to distribute the clergy throughout the nation was reflected in the Association's conscious decision to be a truly national organization (unlike the Royal Society of London) in token of which its annual meetings were to be held not in the metropolises but in one or another provincial centre. The first meeting was in York, "the most central city", one of the founders described it, for the "three kingdoms" of England, Ireland, and Scotland - and, as it happened, the home of Harcourt, who was also the leading light of the Yorkshire Philosophical Society. Subsequent meetings were held at Oxford,

Cambridge, Edinburgh, Dublin, Bristol, Liverpool, and so on. (The return to York in 1844 marks the terminal date of this study.)

It was no accident, according to the authors, that the first meetings were in centres of learning and that only afterwards and the society move to the industrial centres. This was in keeping with the idea of science as a humanistic discipline, as part of the "liberal arts and sciences" that Coleridge took to be the civilizing mission of the clergy. It was also in keeping with this idea of science that the Association gave precedence to the mathematical and physical over the natural and social sciences and to the pure sciences over the practical. These priorities were reflected in the order of the Sections as they evolved after the first few years (including astronomy); B. Chemistry and mineralogy; C. Geology and geography; D. Zoology and botany; E. Medical science; F. Statistics; G. Mechanical science. Only in 1843 was agriculture included, as a sub-section of B - and this in spite of the presence among the leadership of some notable members of the landed aristocracy. In 1835 the president of the Association was the Duke of Northumberland, a proponent of scientific farming; yet his petition for a separate section for agriculture was rejected. When agriculture was admitted, it was understood that it would be dealt with in an abstract and theoretical, in the same manner as chemistry or mineralogy, whose Section it shared.

For Morrell and Thackray this order of science, like the order of the annual meetings, reflected one of the primary purposes of the Association: the promotion of social integration and harmony. The meetings in provincial centres were designed to bring together people not only of different regions but of different classes - city mayors with the Lord Chancellor, Anglican bishops with Unitarian ministers, landed aristocrats with Manchester manufacturers, Cambridge professors with local school-teachers. It was for this reason that women were invited, first as paying guests in the ladies' gallery, then (in 1835) as members. One of the leaders was dubious about this "meddling" with the ladies, and especially about the propriety of taking their money. "Is it not rather American?" he asked. But he then consoled himself with the thought that a local committee might do what it would be "infra dig" for the Association as a whole to do. Others were dubious about the social nature of the meetings, the teas and dinner-parties, excursions and balls, which sometimes loomed larger than the presentation of papers and exchange of scientific knowledge. But most of the participants, including some of the most eminent of them, welcomed the festivities. When Darwin, accompanied by his wife, attended his first meeting of the Association in Southampton in 1846, he enjoyed himself, he later reported, "beyond measure", not for the papers which he found uniformly dull, but for the pleasant acquaintances he made, "especially among the Irish naturalists."

That the meetings themselves, and the "peripatetic" organization of the Association, had this social function is indisputable. Less obvious is the social intent implied in the ordering of the disciplines. Some disciplines, to be sure, were suspect because they might be provocative and divisive - "statistics", for example, which could so easily impinge on the "condition of the people question" and thus on controversial questions of policy and legislation. But in other instances it seems far-fetched to explain the ranking of the disciplines in terms of social integration and harmony. If there was some tension between the proponents of scientific farming and traditional farming, which might account for the delay in admitting agriculture, there was surely far more tension among the geologists on the issue of evolution. Yet geology was present in the Association from the very beginning, and from the beginning was one of the most popular sections.

There was some tension between the proponents of scientific farming and traditional farming, which might account for the delay in admitting agriculture, there was surely far more tension among the geologists on the issue of evolution. Yet geology was present in the Association from the very beginning, and from the beginning was one of the most popular sections.

If geology was relegated to Section C rather than A or B, and if agriculture was only belatedly admitted, it was not for social or political reasons but for theoretical ones, because this was the accepted "hierarchy of sciences", a hierarchy that made mathematics the model against which all other sciences were judged and were found, to one degree or another, wanting. This hierarchy was accepted by thinkers of the most diverse political and social views - by Comte, for example, as much as by Macaulay or Whewell. The authors mention Comte in this connection, but only once and in a footnote. St Simon is not mentioned at all; nor, except in passing, Mill, who was much influenced by both and whose *System of Logic*, published in 1843, was a major contribution to the philosophy of science. A more adequate treatment of positivism would have strengthened the authors' discussion of the "ideology of science" and might have persuaded them to modify or mute a political interpretation that often appears intrusive and excessive. To Morrell and Thackray the ideology propounded by these gentlemen of science - the conception of science as objective and "value-free", the role of science as the "dominant mode of cognition" in an industrial society, the elevation, as scientific disciplines, of the mathematical and physical sciences over the biological and social sciences - all of this was intended to have a pacifying, stabilizing effect upon a society in turmoil. But both Comte and Mill shared much of this scientific ideology without the political, as did others of very different persuasions.

This political theme appears early in the book and recurrently throughout it. That most of the founders of the Association were of a moderately conservative, Whiggish disposition is not in doubt. What may be questioned, however, is the political intent of its ideology. The authors find a significant parallel between the period after the Civil War when the Royal Society was established, and the 1830s and 40s, "the only other period of troubles of comparable severity in modern British life". But the provincial societies which gave the impetus to the formation of the Association flourished during the 1820s at a time of relative quiet, the dissatisfaction with the Royal Society dated from the same time; and the movement for a new organization started before the dramatic events of 1830 - indeed, as the authors testify, there was some sentiment to delay the founding of the Association until after the passions aroused by the Reform Bill had died down.

There is, in fact, quite enough in the intellectual history of the times to account for the rise and growth of the British Association without the assignment of putative political motives: the spirit of the Enlightenment (Scottish and English rather than French), the dominance of natural theology, the secularization of thought and society, the visible, material benefits of science as demonstrated by the Industrial Revolution, the increasing involvement of government in social affairs which made it plausible for scientists to associate for lobbying purposes, the popularity of science (as exemplified by the sport of fossil-hunting in the tracks of the newly-laid railroads) and the accessibility to the layman of serious scientific works. All of this and much more is amply demonstrated in this admirable study of the Victorian worthies who created this most worthy institution.

England without a King 1649-1660 (35pp. £1.50. 0 416 34440 2) by Austin Woolrych. *The Scientific Revolution* (35pp. £1.50. 0 416 35000 2) by F. M. Harman and *The Great Reform Act of 1832* (52pp. £1.50. 0 416 34450 X) by E. J. Evans are three of the series of Lancaster pamphlets, published by Methuen, which are designed to "offer concise and up-to-date accounts of major historical topics, primarily for the help of students preparing for Advanced Level examinations, though they should also be of value to those pursuing introductory courses in universities and other institutions of higher education. They do not rely upon prior textbook knowledge."

New Books from Liverpool

Cowper's Poetry A Critical Study and Reassessment

VINCENT NEWWEY

... the first thorough literary assessment of Cowper's poetry, avoiding the purely biographical approach which has been dominant in twentieth-century writing on Cowper. *British Book News* 'Newwey writes well and with an alert command of critical material... an illuminating book and one to be grateful for.' *THE S*

Liverpool English Texts and Studies Volume 20 0 85323 344 8 £14.50

Profession, Vocation and Culture in Later Medieval England

Edited by

CECIL H. CLOUGH

... a ground plan of the professional evolution of culture in later medieval England which will be indispensable both to those working on the period and to those attempting to understand it. *TES*

0 85323 324 1 £16.50

Democracy and Sectarianism

A Political and Social History of Liverpool 1669-1939

PHILIP WALLER

"This book, a political and social survey of the city from its mid-Victorian prosperity to its twentieth-century decline, combines assiduous research with shrewd perception." *Journal of Modern History* ... a pioneering study, and one without a rival. *TLS*

0 85323 074 9 £24.50

Commerce, Industry and Transport

Studies in Economic Change on Merseyside

Edited by

B. L. ANDERSON and

P. J. M. STONEY

A new title containing valuable information for all those interested in the causes and consequences of long-term change in the economy of Merseyside, which will be of special interest to anyone concerned with the solution of the region's present problems. *TLS*

0 85323 374 8 £14.50

LIVERPOOL UNIVERSITY PRESS

PO Box 147, Liverpool L69 3BX

Screening the party line

Ian Kershaw

DAVID WELCH
Propaganda and the German Cinema
1933-1945
352pp. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
£19.50.
0 19 822598 9

David Welch's study of the German cinema in the Third Reich is a welcome addition to a literature on Nazi propaganda which is sizeable but frequently poor in quality. It examines film propaganda as an expression of Nazi ideology, aiming at the same time to advertise the value of film as a rich source still largely untapped by modern historians.

In the first of two introductory chapters, Welch shows how the State gradually, and mainly for financial reasons, took over the ownership of the film industry as the initially raised hopes of the film bosses after 1933 were disappointed in the face of rising production costs and a sharp drop in income from exports. The second introductory chapter briefly describes Goebbels's principles of propaganda. The following main chapters of the book take major ideological themes — comradeship and heroism, "blood and soil", heroic leadership, war, the enemy image — and relate them to the style and content of Nazi films in order to illustrate how the medium was manipulated for propaganda purposes. The analysis is focused upon the "state

commissioned films" (only a sixth of total film production, though including politically the most important films, which were given disproportionate funding and publicity), alongside newsreels and documentaries. Some thirty films (including all the best-known Nazi "classics") are closely examined and more than a hundred films in all are discussed. Welch can, therefore, claim with some justification that his study is the most comprehensive treatment to date of Nazi film propaganda.

Welch's method is to juxtapose the aim and content of the films under discussion with the basic leitmotifs of Nazi ideology, drawn mainly from *Mein Kampf* and other writings and speeches of Hitler. Naturally, he has no difficulty in illustrating how pervasively these central ideological tenets were reflected in the films. It is not easy to see, however, what conclusions he draws from this in relation to wider interpretative questions about the Third Reich. Though, for instance, he makes use of SD reports to comment briefly upon the reception of specific films during the war, it is not clear how he evaluates the effectiveness of film propaganda in the context of the Nazi regime's problems of political control and mobilization. Generally, the suggestion seems to be one of the power of Nazi propaganda. In one place, for example, Welch writes that, by appealing to a certain racial myth, Goebbels gave the German people a superiority that was permanently denied to others. Yet on the same

page we read that "the failure of the Nazis' racial policies as the war came to an end can be linked to a fundamental weakness of Nazi propaganda in general" (ie, that propaganda success was inherently tied to German military success). In the conclusion we return to a notion of "power" with the rather loose "psychological" generalization that "the middle classes in particular associated the ideology of *Volkskämpe* [sic] and the film propaganda with a world of order and traditions, as opposed to the chaos and alienation of modern society".

Perhaps more important for a book aiming to stress how long-standing *Volkskämpe* ideas dominated the German cinema in the Third Reich is the need to explore thoroughly how this came about. Though Welch hints at ideological continuities in a film industry dominated in the last years of Weimar by the right-wing *Ufa* organization, and at how willingly the industry "coordinated" itself and adjusted to Nazism, the focus is squarely on institutional Gleichschaltung, Goebbels's dominance, and decisions on policy and content coming down from the top. Crucial figure though Goebbels obviously was, Welch's point that there was no serious ideological debate about the role of film within the film world prompts questions not only about the nature of control from above, but also about the ideological affinities, collaboration, and careerism within the *Filmwelt* itself. The Propaganda Minister, it seems, often did not have to push very hard to get his

way. This in itself needs explaining.

Finally, there is the nature of the regime in which this propaganda operated. Though Welch in one place quotes approvingly from Franz Neumann "that the National Socialist regime had not created a totalitarian state", frequent casual generalizations about propaganda "in totalitarian states" and occasional comparisons with the cinema of the Soviet Union make it clear that he is after all working implicitly with a "totalitarian model". Such a model perhaps suggests itself particularly readily to historians of propaganda, though closer acquaintance with the recent historiography of the Third Reich might modify or to work out systematically his approach. As it is, it seems to lead him to assumptions of a consistency of purpose which it is doubtful that the Propaganda Ministry or Nazism in general possessed. Thus he mistakenly implies, for instance, that the "Final Solution" followed a more or less "programmed" development and had essentially already been decided upon

by the outbreak of war and the commissioning of the war and the antisemitic films *Jud Süß* and *Die Ewiges Jude*. And he expresses some surprise in his conclusion that, given the all-embracing organization of the German film industry under the Ministry of Propaganda, there was remarkably little sign of an overall pattern or strategy of film propaganda. With a different model based on the shapelessness, lack of clear direction, and improvisation of Nazi rule, there would have been little need for such surmise.

These criticisms do not detract from Dr Welch's achievement in writing a good, thorough study which extends knowledge of Nazi propaganda: exploitation of the German cinema and shows in unmistakable fashion the potential dangers in any state direction of the mass media. His book also leaves no doubt about the value of film as a historical source. But perhaps the source, like any other, will pay full dividends only when located in a conceptually clear interpretative framework.

Growing in the Gulf

Malcolm Yapp

FRAUKE HEARD-BEY
From Tribal States to United Arab
Emirates: A Society in Transition
522pp. Longman. £19.95.
0 582 78032 2

Just as money can buy an individual a

generosity so it can also buy a state a history. In 1971 the United Arab Emirates began its life with little history. Leaving aside a few volumes of reminiscences and travel, and the helpful survey by Donald Hawley which appeared in 1970, only two works were worthy of scholarly attention. One, *Lorimer's Gazetteer of the Persian Gulf*, was a massive compendium of information produced for official use; the other was J. B. Kelly's masterpiece, *Britain and the Persian Gulf*, a monument to the flame of scholarly enthusiasm, to which might be added his *Eastern Arabian Frontiers*. There came oil wealth, the Abu Dhabi Centre for Documentation Research, and a flood of valuable books including those by Rosemarie Said Zahlan, Muhammad Morsy Abdullah and now Frauke Heard-Bey. The main source for these works remained the British Indian archives, but Arabic material was added, and the result has been greatly to increase our knowledge of western Oman.

Most of the other books mentioned have concentrated on political history; *From Tribal States to United Arab Emirates* is primarily what may be called historical ethnography. A large part is devoted to a description of the traditional society and economy. Frauke Heard-Bey discerns three factors as having governed the development, or more accurately, the lack of development, of the traditional society: the tribal factor, about which she contributes a great deal of information; the lack of economic opportunity, which was primarily the consequence of geography; and Islam.

The dynamic for change was provided by an alteration in the economic situation. None of the traditional economic activities — pearling, fishing, agriculture (mainly date cultivation), animal husbandry, boat building or trade packed enough punch to provide any thrust for development, although enterprising rulers like Shaikh Rashid bin Sa'ud of Dubai could stretch these modest resources a long way. External influences provided some stimulus, but for a long time British interest was confined to the seaboard and little was done in the interior until the search for oil began. It was the discovery of oil less than a quarter of a century ago which changed the history of the United Arab Emirates. Oil provided the funds for development; in 1955 it was an achievement to find £5,000 to restore the underground channels which irrigated the date plantations at Buraimi; by the late 1970s men were talking in terms of billions. It

transformed the people from among the poorest to the wealthiest in the world. It virtually killed off the traditional economy, replacing it by a sprawling edifice of services. It brought about a massive immigration of foreign workers who swamped the indigenous population, reducing it to about a quarter of the whole. And, finally, it made the United Arab Emirates both possible and an object of the most intense envy.

Those who believe in a crude theory of economic imperialism must find the story of Britain and the Middle East an odd one. So long as the countries of the region remained poor British political influence grew: as soon as oil revenues made the same countries worth having Britain pulled out. So it was in *Iran* and *Dubai*. Oil was discovered in *Iran* in 1908, and in 1968, after 15 years of effort Britain announced that she was leaving the Gulf. The United Arab Emirates was quickly pulled together by the abandonment of the 1971 new state made as an inconspicuous start when Bahrain and Qatar pulled out of the negotiations at a late stage and *Iran* helped herself to use of prospective Emirate territory. Experts pointed gloomily to all the ancient disputes which they suggested might tear the infant state apart. In fact, since that date the UAE has gone from strength to strength, building institutions and gradually extending the scope of the federal government, which now employs 26,000 people, and counting military personnel, and provides a wide range of services. There has this success been achieved? The short answer is money and fear of outside intervention, but Frauke Heard-Bey also points to the hard work and good judgment of the UAE's leaders, particularly the Emir, who has chosen to write a mainly descriptive account, dispensing entirely with footnotes, with a view to evoking the experience meant to participants of all ranks. This he has done with considerable skill, and since the result will doubtless please a wide popular readership academic criticism may keep beside the point.

Although Lord's approach is not well-suited to a careful analysis of the many controversies connected with the UAE's retreat and embarkation, it must be said that his interpretations of the major issues are soundly based on recent scholarship. For example, he is at length with the origins and causes of the famous German "Halt order" between May 24 and 27 which unintentionally made the "miracle" of *Dunkirk* possible. In showing that Hitler and the senior commanders such as von Rundstedt were responsible, he demolishes the once popular myth that Hitler had deliberately let the BEF off the hook (and information so far derived about the alleged Hitler-Albert Speer, almost echoing the Duke of Wellington, remarked that anyone who believed that would believe anything Lord also correctly points

out that the British and French had no excuse for treating the Belgian request for a ceasefire on May 27 as a surprise, let alone a betrayal. The Belgians had repeatedly warned of their approaching collapse in the previous days, and furthermore had good reason to feel that they had been shabbily treated by their more powerful allies. Lastly, this account is balanced and thorough in explaining how poor communications and mutual misunderstandings led the French to believe that they had been deceived by "perfidious Albion" in the withdrawal to the coast and the proportion of troops successfully evacuated. As regards the last and most bitter controversy over the rearguard, Churchill was unintentionally to blame for undertaking, in an emotional outburst at the Supreme War Council meeting in Paris on May 31, that the BEF would provide the rearguard. Simultaneously the British commanders inside the perimeter, Gort and his successor Alexander, were obtaining permission from London to withdraw the last British troops at their discretion. Surprisingly, Lord does not quote Alexander's anguished reactions when confronted with conflicting responsibilities. In the event French troops held the perimeter for about forty-eight hours after the last British troops had withdrawn. In an attempt to rescue the remaining French troops on the last nights of June 2-3 and 3-4, Lord is particularly successful in showing what this meant for crews and who thought their mission had been completed.

The author's technique of assembling his chapters from a great variety of personal experiences, rather like a mosaic, will appeal to some readers more than the reviewer, who would prefer fewer references to individuals in the text and more documentary sources available in the appendices. A typical chapter, "Pleaty Troops, Few Boats", begins:

At grips with the Provos

Richard West

A. F. N. CLARKE
Contact
160pp. Secker and Warburg. £6.95.
0436 09988 5

Contact, by a former paratroop officer, A. F. N. Clarke, is the best account we have had of what it is like to serve in Northern Ireland during the latest eruption of terrorism. He was stationed in 1973 in the Ardoyne and in the Shankill districts of Belfast, and in 1975 in the infamous village of Crossmaglen, an outpost of South Armagh surrounded on three sides by the Irish Republic.

The anti-terrorist war is nasty and violent in different ways in town and countryside. In Belfast, the security forces spend much of their time holed up in ruined houses, in a kind of hide-and-seek game with the IRA, the keeping watch day and night for the fleeing sight of a gunman. Then there are raids on houses, acting on information (usually false and malicious), exchanging brutal insults with those who are hauled out of bed and searched. A few of the people questioned are friendly, or make a show of it: "Hearts and minds. Be nice, encourage the talk, something might

slip out. The tea served out of dirty, cracked mugs tastes like dishwater and there have been instances of ground glass being mixed with the sugar."

The hatred between the troops and the Belfast people is shocking and painful: "We know that this woman has a retarded son. In fact, the district has a special bus that picks up the mentally deficient in the area and takes them off to a special school. Poor little buggers. Not knowing what it's all about. Smiling empty smiles. . . . The lads take the piss unmercifully with their comments like: 'Hello madam, who's your monkey?' Anything to spark a reaction. Anything to get us going, being part of the community. Nobody is innocent in our eyes. We must have our revenge."

The terrorists at Crossmaglen are better trained and more formidable than what Clarke calls the "cowboys" of Belfast. The British patrols are in constant danger from snipers in the surrounding fields and hills, even within their little fortresses. The IRA are now past masters at setting mines to explode from a pressure-pad in the earth, a trip-wire laid in a gap in the hedge, or long-distance detonation from over the border in the Republic. It seems to the troops quite senseless to stay in this district of South Armagh where there are only two Protestants.

Almost the only pleasures of Crossmaglen come from the glimpse of a bauger or fox on night patrol, the wonders of nature that touch even the hardest paratroopers: "Only recently, on a patrol, one of them found a young marsh-warbler suffering from exhaustion and seemingly incapable of fending for itself. The ion (private soldier) concerned emptied a pouch of his pack, filled it with grass and popped the bird in. For two days he carried the bird around before we got back to base. He then cared for the bird until it was well enough to set free."

This is an unpretentious book by a young man who sensibly has confined himself to what he has seen and felt in this squalid, peculiar kind of soldiering; one could not describe it as warfare, though it is very dangerous. Clarke does not philosophize on the troubles except for the rather banal reflection that "if you aren't an agnostic already, a trip to Northern Ireland will certainly make you one. How many evils have been committed in this country in the name of religion?"

Perhaps because *Contact* is not a political book, it gives us fresh perceptions about Northern Ireland. The descriptions of the fear and hatred in Crossmaglen and the slums of Belfast serve to remind us just how isolated the troubles are. Most of Northern Ireland

is peaceful; most of Belfast is peaceful. The troubles are in fact confined to certain peculiar places. The Belfast slums are violent just as the slums of Glasgow and Liverpool used to be violent — and also split on sectarian lines. But in Britain, the old slums were destroyed and the occupants sent to high-rise slums in the suburbs, where they are now even more miserable, but no longer tightly knit in their fierce, defensive communities. The slum-dwellers of Belfast, Catholic and Protestant, have always refused to go off to housing estates such as Craigavon.

South Armagh, and Crossmaglen, in particular, have been renowned for banditry since long before the present troubles, indeed since even before the Protestants came to Ireland. Crossmaglen has long been under the rule of two rival families who would "steal from their grandmothers"; the Irish people say. The Irish writer and folklorist Benedict Kiely, who comes from County Tyrone, knows all the words of a ballad about the town, and the young man who has his cattle stolen on market day. The chorus goes:

Two not the lads from Shercock,
Nor the boys from Ballybay,
Was the wild, wild men from Crossmaglen
Put whiskey in me tay.

Another startling fact that emerges from Clarke's book is how the Army hates the Protestants almost more than the Catholics. The passage I have quoted of soldiers making fun of retarded children refers to the loyalist Shankill Road. The author is almost killed by Protestant machine-guns. His men button-charge a Protestant mob and raid a Protestant drinking club:

Bloody faces, spilled beer, broken bottles and glasses litter the floor. Sobbing women, shaking youths, cramped into this tiny den of hate and violence. . . . Outside, the

cordon is working well except for some bigger screaming about maltreatment, only to get another wallop over the head with a baton and collapse insensible on the pavement.

Clarke remarks: "We forget that the first shots fired at the Army came from so-called 'Loyalist' guns, and that the first Army casualties were inflicted by the people calling themselves part of England."

The IRA like to present themselves as freedom-fighters opposed to "British Imperialism"; they compare themselves with the Irgun Zvai Leumi in Palestine or the Patriotic Front in Zimbabwe. Anyone who has seen the film *The Battle of Algiers* will grasp how completely different Ireland is from countries like that. For one thing, the IRA do not represent the mass of the people of Northern Ireland, probably not even of the Catholics. They are strong only in special border regions like Crossmaglen and the slums of Belfast and Derry. Nor is it possible to present the British as really foreign. The British and Irish have lived side by side for centuries, if not always amicably. There are millions of people of Irish origin in Britain as well as the one million people of British origin in Ulster. Many British troops actually come from Northern Ireland.

And of course we look alike and speak the same language. Just this last point makes it all so much more bitter. When British troops raided a house in Palestine, Cyprus or Malaya they no doubt were cursed in ripe Hebrew, Greek or Chinese but they did not understand it. When Clarke raided a house in the Protestant Shankill Road, he had to endure such remarks as this from a middle-aged housewife: "Youse fucking bastards. I hope your children all die. I hope some big nigger's fucking your wife. God rot your soul."

As seen from above

Shelford Bidwell

PETER MEAD
The Eye in the Air: History of Air
Observation and Reconnaissance for
the Army 1785-1945
274pp. with 81 black-and-white
plates. HMSO. £10.50.
0 11 771224 8

Air reconnaissance, a vital product of air-power, is a neglected subject. Its beginnings were primitive, but the few squadrons of the Royal Flying Corps which accompanied the British Expeditionary Force to France in 1914 grew with astonishing rapidity into a large and highly technical apparatus, resting on the four pillars of reliable aeroplanes, cameras, the long proving radio transmitters and accurate large-scale maps, their details supplied by the cameras. A separate but cognate activity was to locate targets for the artillery and direct the fire of the guns. So advanced were the techniques developed by the pioneers that a later way of blitzkrieg and amphibious operations.

A history of air reconnaissance was long overdue, and Peter Mead, an artillery officer, pilot and former commander of the revived Army Air Corps, has both the experience and knowledge to write it. *The Eye in the Air* chronicles the first attempts by balloons to observe the battlefield, the early history of flying, the creation of the Royal Flying Corps in 1912 (one of the many great services conferred on the British Army by Haldane) and all the campaigns in which the British air arm has been involved from 1900 to the end of the Second World War. It includes an account of the fraught period in which the Army and the newly created Royal Air Force, established in 1918, were totally at odds.

These early quarrels were, perhaps, inevitable. The RFC, as part of the Army, had regarded reconnaissance as its first duty and the aim of its offensive operations as being only to screen the

Army from hostile observation and secure freedom of action for its own pilots. But gradually these priorities came to be reversed, for the imaginative and adventurous volunteers attracted by flying perceived that the future of warfare might be in the air, and not, as Liddell Hart once put it, in "mausoleums of mud".

The air-marshals of the new Royal Air Force fixed their eyes on grander and more distant objectives than acting as an auxiliary service to the soldiers. In the inter-war years the pilots of the army cooperation squadrons ranked a poor third after the fighters and bombers, and spent as little time as possible in them. The generals reacted by fighting to regain control of at least a fraction of the air force, only to be stoutly and — as air force officers believe — rightly repelled.

All this was very deplorable, but Brigadier Mead does not pretend to objectivity. He considers that the creation of the RAF as a separate service was "not the result of careful consideration" but rather an emotionally inspired "political decision". Here one cannot help feeling that he is beating a horse long dead. What he omits to say is that as early as the summer of 1941 the two sides overcame the problem of meeting the Army's needs while retaining central RAF control, and the joint machinery evolved was working perfectly by August 1942. No institution is free of friction in the Clausewitzian sense, and there were some bad moments when Tedder and Coningham fell out with Montgomery in 1943, but Mead's own account shows that no great operation was ever placed in hazard or even impeded by the RAF; on the contrary. As for his conclusions, surely the correct one is that good cooperation depends not on structural patterns and the hierarchy of command but on an attitude of mind. The bias on the part of the author does not detract from the value of his book as a work of record. Mead's readers will be stimulated, even provoked, by his prejudices, and cannot fail to be instructed by his long excursion from the age of Montgolfier to the Mosquito.

An underground success

Tullo Halperin-Donghi

RICHARD GILLESPIE
Soldiers of Perón: Argentina's
Montoneros
310pp. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
£19.50.
0 19 821131 7

In less than 300 pages, Richard Gillespie records the convoluted history of the Montoneros, from their beginnings as a tiny band of former Catholic right-wing activists, who by daring and luck won celebrity as the kidnappers and killers of former president Aramburu, to their final metamorphosis into an equally tiny group of exiled generals without an army. Thanks to the author's tireless and shrewd scrutiny of sources as disparate and heterogeneous as they are bound to be when dealing with an unsuccessful underground movement, English-speaking readers can now rely on an admirable study of a subject on which D. C. Hodges's *Argentina (1943-1976): The national revolution and resistance* had previously to do service as the standard reference for lack of better alternatives.

Gillespie offers his readers both a

detailed chronicle of the Montoneros experience and a running argument with the movement's theoretical assumptions, its strategic and tactical decisions, its organizational style and its day-to-day political choices. When he started his research his view of the Montoneros was — as he well knew — an extremely controversial one; but during the time when he was preparing to write it with documents and arguments, history itself (to use a turn of phrase much favoured by his subjects of study) vindicated it to excess. The paradoxical result is that the feature of Gillespie's book which his 1983 readers will probably find most surprising is the polemical vehemence he uses to advance views now almost universally shared.

It would of course be unfair to blame the author for being too often right. On the other hand one might well wonder whether an exhaustive inventory of what the Montoneros did wrong is what is most needed just now; as a cautionary tale to fledgling revolutionaries eager to follow in their path the book's usefulness would be considerable, but it is unlikely that the Montoneros' example is sufficiently seductive for such warnings to be needed, and Gillespie's narrative in any case adheres too closely to its subject to achieve the perspective necessary to understand it historically.

Before blaming him for this, one should ask oneself whether it is in fact possible to write a book on the Montoneros on lines very different from those he has chosen. It is not clear that they offer a self-contained subject for historical enquiry; the keys to their historical role are probably to be found in other elements of the Argentine crisis which Gillespie relegates to the background. But even readers who may object to his definition of his task as being to assess the discrepancies between the Montoneros' ambitions and their achievements will have to admit that what he intended to do he has done admirably.

It is possible, of course, to prefer a different line of enquiry, and start from the fact (properly acknowledged here) that the Argentine underground, far from providing a stimulus for a larger mass movement, navigated on the crest of an early popular revolution that not only challenged political authority but overtopped the traditionally acknowledged limits even for "illegal" protest. This situation (exceptional in Latin America) can be linked with the ability of the Montoneros to inspire and control a political current within

the Peronist movement at the very moment when their military fortunes were at their lowest. The situation in Argentina in 1973 might more usefully be compared with that of France in 1945 than with Latin American experiences: it offered the Montoneros an unequalled opportunity to use their marginal military contribution to a political outcome which was greeted with enthusiasm by an unexpectedly wide consensus, to win for themselves a larger and more legitimate political voice than any leftist party had ever enjoyed in the past. But, while this is an extremely plausible approach to the Montoneros, it doesn't invalidate the line of enquiry Gillespie follows nor does it challenge his eminently sensible conclusions.

There is one point, however, (and one of central importance) where the author's understanding of his task has dulled his usually admirable perceptiveness: the peculiar relation which the Montoneros developed to the Peronist movement and to Perón himself. Gillespie is right to charge the Montoneros leadership with having somehow convinced itself that Perón was a true revolutionary and having defined its relation to him as one of total subordination on the strength of this preposterous belief. But the charge is as irrelevant as it is well-founded: the Peronist movement offered the Montoneros the one avenue to political legitimacy and, hated as they were by those who really counted in the local Peronist leadership, only the supreme leader in exile could open that avenue for them. Their attitude was not radically different from that of many seasoned politicians at the time, who had very few delusions about Perón; for them too, there was no alternative: to sympathize because the old man had already ensured for himself the central position in any viable solution to the political crisis, and had never believed in equal alliances.

What finally doomed the Montoneros movement was not so much its assessment of Perón as its assessment of itself; since the Montoneros were convinced that it was the military prowess of the underground which had forced the military government into almost unconditional surrender (a self-deception carefully nurtured by their far-away idols) they were totally unprepared to face an unexpected but brutal challenge at the very moment when they confidently hoped to reap the fruits of total victory.

Most of the other books mentioned have concentrated on political history; *From Tribal States to United Arab Emirates* is primarily what may be called historical ethnography. A large part is devoted to a description of the traditional society and economy. Frauke Heard-Bey discerns three factors as having governed the development, or more accurately, the lack of development, of the traditional society: the tribal factor, about which she contributes a great deal of information; the lack of economic opportunity, which was primarily the consequence of geography; and Islam.

The dynamic for change was provided by an alteration in the economic situation. None of the traditional economic activities — pearling, fishing, agriculture (mainly date cultivation), animal husbandry, boat building or trade packed enough punch to provide any thrust for development, although enterprising rulers like Shaikh Rashid bin Sa'ud of Dubai could stretch these modest resources a long way. External influences provided some stimulus, but for a long time British interest was confined to the seaboard and little was done in the interior until the search for oil began. It was the discovery of oil less than a quarter of a century ago which changed the history of the United Arab Emirates. Oil provided the funds for development; in 1955 it was an achievement to find £5,000 to restore the underground channels which irrigated the date plantations at Buraimi; by the late 1970s men were talking in terms of billions. It

transformed the people from among the poorest to the wealthiest in the world. It virtually killed off the traditional economy, replacing it by a sprawling edifice of services. It brought about a massive immigration of foreign workers who swamped the indigenous population, reducing it to about a quarter of the whole. And, finally, it made the United Arab Emirates both possible and an object of the most intense envy.

Those who believe in a crude theory of economic imperialism must find the story of Britain and the Middle East an odd one. So long as the countries of the region remained poor British political influence grew: as soon as oil revenues made the same countries worth having Britain pulled out. So it was in *Iran* and *Dubai*. Oil was discovered in *Iran* in 1908, and in 1968, after 15 years of effort Britain announced that she was leaving the Gulf. The United Arab Emirates was quickly pulled together by the abandonment of the 1971 new state made as an inconspicuous start when Bahrain and Qatar pulled out of the negotiations at a late stage and *Iran* helped herself to use of prospective Emirate territory. Experts pointed gloomily to all the ancient disputes which they suggested might tear the infant state apart. In fact, since that date the UAE has gone from strength to strength, building institutions and gradually extending the scope of the federal government, which now employs 26,000 people, and counting military personnel, and provides a wide range of services. There has this success been achieved? The short answer is money and fear of outside intervention, but Frauke Heard-Bey also points to the hard work and good judgment of the UAE's leaders, particularly the Emir, who has chosen to write a mainly descriptive account, dispensing entirely with footnotes, with a view to evoking the experience meant to participants of all ranks. This he has done with considerable skill, and since the result will doubtless please a wide popular readership academic criticism may keep beside the point.

Although Lord's approach is not well-suited to a careful analysis of the many controversies connected with the UAE's retreat and embarkation, it must be said that his interpretations of the major issues are soundly based on recent scholarship. For example, he is at length with the origins and causes of the famous German "Halt order" between May 24 and 27 which unintentionally made the "miracle" of *Dunkirk* possible. In showing that Hitler and the senior commanders such as von Rundstedt were responsible, he demolishes the once popular myth that Hitler had deliberately let the BEF off the hook (and information so far derived about the alleged Hitler-Albert Speer, almost echoing the Duke of Wellington, remarked that anyone who believed that would believe anything Lord also correctly points

out that the British and French had no excuse for treating the Belgian request for a ceasefire on May 27 as a surprise, let alone a betrayal. The Belgians had repeatedly warned of their approaching collapse in the previous days, and furthermore had good reason to feel that they had been shabbily treated by their more powerful allies. Lastly, this account is balanced and thorough in explaining how poor communications and mutual misunderstandings led the French to believe that they had been deceived by "perfidious Albion" in the withdrawal to the coast and the proportion of troops successfully evacuated. As regards the last and most bitter controversy over the rearguard, Churchill was unintentionally to blame for undertaking, in an emotional outburst at the Supreme War Council meeting in Paris on May 31, that the BEF would provide the rearguard. Simultaneously the British commanders inside the perimeter, Gort and his successor Alexander, were obtaining permission from London to withdraw the last British troops at their discretion. Surprisingly, Lord does not quote Alexander's anguished reactions when confronted with conflicting responsibilities. In the event French troops held the perimeter for about forty-eight hours after the last British troops had withdrawn. In an attempt to rescue the remaining French troops on the last nights of June 2-3 and 3-4, Lord is particularly successful in showing what this meant for crews and who thought their mission had been completed.

The author's technique of assembling his chapters from a great variety of personal experiences, rather like a mosaic, will appeal to some readers more than the reviewer, who would prefer fewer references to individuals in the text and more documentary sources available in the appendices. A typical chapter, "Pleaty Troops, Few Boats", begins:

Brian Bond
The Miracle of Dunkirk
320pp. Allen Lane. £8.95.
0 1719 1211 1

Scarcely a year passes without at least one new account of Dunkirk, and the fortieth anniversary in 1980 yielded several mediocre additions. Following *Dunkirk, The Sands of the Road to the Nine Days* (one of the earliest and best, by a participant, David Dixon), and *The Necessary Myth* we are in danger of running out of titles. It must therefore be asked whether Walter Lord, a prolific American writer of popular histories, has anything significant to add. He could probably claim that he has drawn upon more eye-witness accounts, corresponding with or interviewing some 300 participants, and consulted some diaries, letters, shipping lists and local newspapers than any previous author. He has explored relevant files at the PRO, some opened as recently as 1977, and has made selective forays into French and German archives. Though incomplete, his reading in British publications, especially journals, is impressive. Six years of intensive research might have produced a non-professional but still first-class work of accessible history, comparable to Eleanor Clarke's superb *End of the Affair* which dealt with the whole campaign of May-June 1940 from the Anglo-French viewpoint. Instead Mr Lord has chosen to write a mainly descriptive account, dispensing entirely with footnotes, with a view to evoking the experience meant to participants of all ranks. This he has done with considerable skill, and since the result will doubtless please a wide popular readership academic criticism may keep beside the point.

Although Lord's approach is not well-suited to a careful analysis of the many controversies connected with the UAE's retreat and embarkation, it must be said that his interpretations of the major issues are soundly based on recent scholarship. For example, he is at length with the origins and causes of the famous German "Halt order" between May 24 and 27 which unintentionally made the "miracle" of *Dunkirk* possible. In showing that Hitler and the senior commanders such as von Rundstedt were responsible, he demolishes the once popular myth that Hitler had deliberately let the BEF off the hook (and information so far derived about the alleged Hitler-Albert Speer, almost echoing the Duke of Wellington, remarked that anyone who believed that would believe anything Lord also correctly points

out that the British and French had no excuse for treating the Belgian request for a ceasefire on May 27 as a surprise, let alone a betrayal. The Belgians had repeatedly warned of their approaching collapse in the previous days, and furthermore had good reason to feel that they had been shabbily treated by their more powerful allies. Lastly, this account is balanced and thorough in explaining how poor communications and mutual misunderstandings led the French to believe that they had been deceived by "perfidious Albion" in the withdrawal to the coast and the proportion of troops successfully evacuated. As regards the last and most bitter controversy over the rearguard, Churchill was unintentionally to blame for undertaking, in an emotional outburst at the Supreme War Council meeting in Paris on May 31, that the BEF would provide the rearguard. Simultaneously the British commanders inside the perimeter, Gort and his successor Alexander, were obtaining permission from London to withdraw the last British troops at their discretion. Surprisingly, Lord does not quote Alexander's anguished reactions when confronted with conflicting responsibilities. In the event French troops held the perimeter for about forty-eight hours after the last British troops had withdrawn. In an attempt to rescue the remaining French troops on the last nights of June 2-3 and 3-4, Lord is particularly successful in showing what this meant for crews and who thought their mission had been completed.

The author's technique of assembling his chapters from a great variety of personal experiences, rather like a mosaic, will appeal to some readers more than the reviewer, who would prefer fewer references to individuals in the text and more documentary sources available in the appendices. A typical chapter, "Pleaty Troops, Few Boats", begins:

out that the British and French had no excuse for treating the Belgian request for a ceasefire on May 27 as a surprise, let alone a betrayal. The Belgians had repeatedly warned of their approaching collapse in the previous days, and furthermore had good reason to feel that they had been shabbily treated by their more powerful allies. Lastly, this account is balanced and thorough in explaining how poor communications and mutual misunderstandings led the French to believe that they had been deceived by "perfidious Albion" in the withdrawal to the coast and the proportion of troops successfully evacuated. As regards the last and most bitter controversy over the rearguard, Churchill was unintentionally to blame for undertaking, in an emotional outburst at the Supreme War Council meeting in Paris on May 31, that the BEF would provide the rearguard. Simultaneously the British commanders inside the perimeter, Gort and his successor Alexander, were obtaining permission from London to withdraw the last British troops at their discretion. Surprisingly, Lord does not quote Alexander's anguished reactions when confronted with conflicting responsibilities. In the event French troops held the perimeter for about forty-eight hours after the last British troops had withdrawn. In an attempt to rescue the remaining French troops on the last nights of June 2-3 and 3-4, Lord is particularly successful in showing what this meant for crews and who thought their mission had been completed.

The author's technique of assembling his chapters from a great variety of personal experiences, rather like a mosaic, will appeal to some readers more than the reviewer, who would prefer fewer references to individuals in the text and more documentary sources available in the appendices. A typical chapter, "Pleaty Troops, Few Boats", begins:

In his office just off the Dynamo Room Admiral Ramsay listened politely as Captain . . . described the desperate situation at Dunkirk. . . . Mountbatten had the sinking feeling that he wasn't getting his point across.

On the same page: Second Lieutenant D.C. Snowdon lay in exhausted sleep below decks, when he was suddenly awakened by what sounded like someone hammering on the hull. This turned out to be German artillery firing on the vessel.

This style is fine for evoking atmosphere but less satisfactory if you are looking for information or an accurate picture. Information or an accurate picture. Information or an accurate picture.

on each day, and what proportion from the beaches as distinct from the east mole of Dunkirk harbour? Lord gives a few sample figures only. Similarly, the chapter "Torpedoes in the Night" begins as an account of the German navy's role but quickly dissolves into personal experiences. Also the author only touches on the puzzling issue of why the German ground forces were so slow to overwhelm the defences after May 31.

It would be difficult to make the later stages of Dunkirk boring, and in fact this account reaches an exciting climax in describing the "miracle" as experienced "in the inferno on the beaches at sea as the home ports. Since sea and air command had now fragmented and it was mainly a

Forms of brotherly union

Frances Spalding

FRIDOLF JOHNSON (Editor)
Rockwell Kent: An Anthology of his Works
 358pp, with about 400 illustrations in colour and black-and-white.
 Collins, £30.
 0 00 216659 3

In Rockwell Kent's art the time of day is often sunset or sunrise. In both his paintings and his prints a strong light from one direction creates sharp highlights and deep shadows. It helps make his sense of space and mass so clear (to the point of being obvious) that his designs can be understood at a glance. His control of form gives his work a clenched-fist quality: to an eye educated on Impressionism his emphatically structured landscapes can seem melodramatic. Though closer to Post-Impressionism in their sense of design, they do not exploit colour, nor do they use it imaginatively, but, even when they take on the strong hues of heightened reality, are tonal and conventional, closer to Clarkson Stanfield than to Seurat. His colour is always tied to shape, located and localized, in an orange cliff lit by sunlight or a tree ablaze in autumn, and it contributes to the vivid realism of the whole.

It is Kent's strong grasp of form that enables him to create so convincingly a vital sense of scale. He was aware that detail tends to diminish scale and that a simple shape can more easily have a massive dimension. In "Battering Ram", one of his illustrations to the 1930 edition of *Moby Dick*, the central plunging shape of the whale fills the whole design from top to bottom, its monumental, emphasized still further by the diminutive boat in the whale's jaws and by the stars in the sky reflected in the swirling waters below. Kent often uses stars in his pictures, their sparkling romanticism alleviating the stark aridity of many of his scenes. He entitled one of his paintings "To the Stars" and, like the figure portrayed in it, seems to have acquired much of his experience of nature from lying on his back in the open, in far-away places with mountains ringing the horizon. Boats are also a frequent motif, as are men climbing rigging or holding on to masts; they act as look-outs and symbolize Kent's belief in the triumph of experience over theory.

Kent concentrated on the isolation of the individual when set against the vastness of nature, surroundings that do not diminish or alienate the figure but purify and ennoble. This idea is given slightly ludicrous expression in his painting "To the Universe", in which a naked youth stands on a rock beside a waterfall and raises his goblet to the stars. Many of the remote spots that Kent visited are, however, powerfully evoked in the paintings—especially in his uncannily still, Arctic landscapes.

His inventive and daring use of form should by rights have earned him a significant place in the modernist histories of twentieth-century art. His career is spanned by the writings of two of this century's most influential art critics, Roger Fry and Clement Greenberg, both of whom found an indefinable "significance" in formal arrangements. But each required a "purity" of form and Kent's art, though it contains qualities that both critics would have praised in a still-life or abstract design, was considered too unsuitable for placing such emphasis on subject-matter. This combination of strong formal design with isolated subject-matter makes him a rarity. It is perhaps the main reason why, though a cult figure in America, he has been largely left out of post-war histories of twentieth-century art, and why the present volume is so welcome.

This lavish publication not only reproduces in colour a generous survey of his paintings; but also contains selections from his writings and a lengthy biographical introduction, interspersed throughout with illustrations and prints. The book as a whole has been

carefully designed, albeit in a somewhat heavy-handed imitation of Rockwell Kent's own style. The impression it gives is of a man of independence, passion and alarming conviction. One is repeatedly reminded of William Blake, whom Kent admired, but instead of Blake's burning bow Kent brings on the battering ram. The title of his autobiography, *It's Me O Lord*, takes Blake's instruction "Doubt is self-contradiction" almost over the edge of parody. This is not to cast suspicion on the artist's integrity for it is clear that Kent was a man whose feeling and thought, whose art and actions were all of a piece, a man for whom a division between form and content would be nothing less than heresy.

His ideas were moulded by the nineteenth century; three men in particular played a crucial role in his development. The first was his neighbour Rufus Weeks, who introduced him to the Socialist Party, thereby giving direction to Kent's growing dissatisfaction with social injustice. Second, he had as a teacher at the New York School of Art Robert Henri, leader of the Ashcan School, whose sympathy with low-life subjects taught Kent that art was a means of speech and not just a matter of picture-making. And third, he read Tolstoy, discovering on his second reading of *What Is Art?* a sense of purpose that he had hitherto lacked. Tolstoy's conclusion, that good art is that which actively promotes "the brotherly union of mankind", placed Kent's paintings at the centre of his existence as a social being. It left him convinced that art must unquestionably have "a social value"; that is... it must be addressed, and in comprehensible terms, to the understanding of mankind.

As his paintings did not bring him financial success, Kent reluctantly turned his hand to book illustration and graphics, at first signing his work "Fridolf Jnr". Almost against his will he was caught up in the print boom of the 1920s and the corresponding demand for finely printed and designed books. He was to find, as Blake had before him, that the illustrated book particularly suited his temperament, with the result that his talent flowered. By the end of this decade he had become America's known graphic artist; in advertising his name conferred a cachet that normal publicity did not have. He began to use his growing celebrity to bring attention to liberal causes: he cancelled an exhibition of his work due to be shown in a museum run by the state that had ordered the execution of Sacco and Vanzetti; he stood beside strikers outside firms like the Lakeside Press and General Electric who were also his employers. He knew how to be provocative and was himself easily provoked; Fridolf Johnson recounts how in the 1920s he carried out a personal vendetta against road signs, cutting down the more offending examples at night; he regularly attracted law suits and himself did legal battle with a railroad (for discontinuing service) and with a steamship company (for misplacing his son). Concerning public issues, Kent's progressive views increasingly attracted antagonism and this eventually eclipsed his fame. When he was accused of being a communist, McCarthy's "blacklist" in 1950, a museum in Maine cancelled not only a forthcoming show of his work but also negotiations to house his personal archive. Kent retired to the house he had built in the Adirondacks, wrote a 600-page autobiography and waited sixteen years until another American museum offered him a retrospective.

He was driven into the background not only by McCarthyism but by a resurgence of "pure" formalist art epitomized by the work of the American Abstract Expressionists. His position was not helped by the emergence of a new ideology which, during the Cold War, associated abstract art with a "free" society and regarded realism as the expression of a regimented totalitarian state. While New York's Museum of Modern Art was preparing *The New American Painting*, an exhibition which toured eight European countries in 1958-9, Kent's art was being lauded in the

Soviet Union, where he was the first American artist to be given a major show. It opened at the Pushkin Museum of Art in Moscow in December 1957 and moved to the Hermitage early the following year. Kent was unable to attend, having for the previous six years been denied a passport. Because he saw it as an affront to American democracy, Kent had consistently refused to provide the required affidavit, though he apparently was not and never had been a member of the Communist Party. When finally his passport was returned to him (his case, combined with that of a psychiatrist, reached the United States Supreme Court, which ruled in his favour), he made several visits to Russia, where he was treated as an official guest. This *rapprochement* with the Soviet Union did not weaken his abiding love of the United States. But when in 1967 he was awarded the International Lenin Peace Prize, he condemned in his acceptance speech the American intervention in Vietnam; he also sent to the Vietnamese ambassador in Moscow \$10,000 for the suffering women and children of Vietnam's Liberation Front, as "a token of shame and sorrow" at what his country had done.

Kent emerges from this book as a man of integrity and contradiction. He was a romantic and at the same time eminently practical; he was a born wanderer and yet on more than one occasion he expended considerable labour building his own house; he was generous and gregarious, yet proved incapable of lasting family commitments; like Eric Gill, his sexual and creative energies inclined him towards excess, but he subjected his art to rigorous design, achieving a style aptly described by himself as "the embodiment of economy, precision and dignity".

The naïf of naïfs

Christopher Reid

YANN LE PICHON

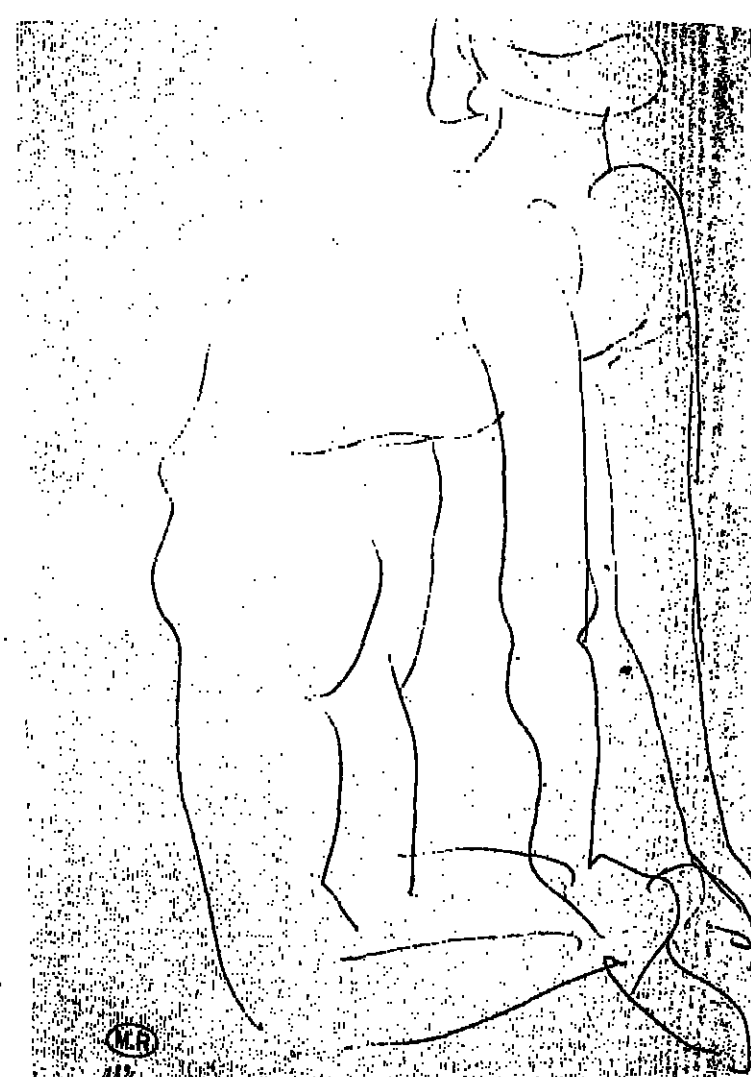
The World of Henri Rousseau
 Translated by Joachim Neugroschel.
 285pp, with colour and black-and-white illustrations. Oxford: Phaidon.
 £30.
 0 7148 2256 6

It would have been pleasant to write that *The World of Henri Rousseau* is a volume in which the values of plush production and innovative scholarship unite to find favour with every kind of reader. The serious-minded coffee-table book is no longer the paradox it may once have seemed, and Yann Le Pichon's illustrated monograph has, on the face of it, a strong claim to be considered in this category.

Its publishers have certainly made strenuous efforts to impress. "This work," we read, "which owes its layout to Pierre Chapolet, its technical production to Claude Chapuis, and its iconography to Catherine Feroold, was set in Palatino by American-Stratford Graphic Services, Inc. It was engraved by Actual, under the direction of René Bequelin, printed by Weber, Switzerland, and bound by Brun, at Malesherbes, France."

An international production, no less — and one that would not look out of place in the "library" of any jet-setting picture-dealer, left to lie around as casual customer-bait. It there are faults in its design, they are to do with over-emphasis and a tendency to vulgar ornamentation: elaborate capitals at the beginning of each section of the text, figures excerpted from paintings to act as emblematic motifs, and so on. In terms of manufacture, however, this is a sturdy and good-looking piece of work, with the outstanding virtue that its many colour reproductions do justice to the painting under discussion.

More importantly, the author has amassed a quantity of visual material that indicates the extent to which Rousseau owed his imagery to the popular and secondary arts of his time, as well as to the example of established



"Nude woman kneeling, her trunk thrown back", from Rodin: drawings and watercolours by Claude Judin (123pp, with 100 illustrations in colour. Thames and Hudson, £40. 0 500 23368 3).

painters. His researches here have been thorough-going. Following the hint of Rousseau's grand-daughter, Jeanne Bernard-Rousseau, Le Pichon has identified many of the sources from which the painter derived his characteristic subject-matter.

It is now accepted that Rousseau never travelled to the exotic places which are recorded in his work, and that, in spite of Apollinaire's flamboyant evocation of the outlandish flora and fauna of Mexico in a piece designed to puff the artist, Rousseau's inglorious military career never took him as far as the Mexican campaign. Le Pichon has collected enough evidence to show how many of the animals in Rousseau's work were copied straight from a contemporary publication bathetically entitled, *Bêtes Sauvages: environ 200 illustrations amusantes de la vie des animaux, avec texte instructif*. The tigers, jaguars, antelopes and monkeys that inhabit Rousseau's boathouse jungles can easily be identified in the plates Le Pichon has selected for illustration here, allowing for such distortion as may be attributed either to the artist's imagination or to his clumsiness.

Rousseau's borrowings turn out to have been habitual and generously eclectic. Delacroix, Gauguin, even the pompous academic virtuosi of his day with whom Rousseau longed to be associated, lent him themes and details of treatment. Pursuing his researches yet further, Le Pichon has discovered striking similarities between the weirdly idyllic Parisian landscapes that make up so much of Rousseau's oeuvre and the views that were current on postcards of the time. Even the awkwardly sky-jogged balloons and dirigibles that seem so peculiar to the painter's vision of things turn out to have been cribbed from commonly available sources. There was no image too humble to be pilfered.

Of course, none of this need be thought to detract from Rousseau's achievement, which becomes all the more poignant when one learns its improbable genesis, the transmutation of a kind of visual kleptomania into art of extraordinary complexity and grandeur. What we need to consider is how this came about, and what it is in

Rousseau's work that makes it so compelling, in spite of the artist's obvious technical limitations. Le Pichon, like many other commentators, fastens on the question of Rousseau's childishness. That is an important element in his work, but I remain unconvinced, or at least untouched, by his heavily Freudian attempt to interpret his subject's career as the reconstitution of a childhood that was in reality loveless and lonely. Certainly, Rousseau painted with something of the wilfulness of a child, pre-emptorily simplifying and distorting what he saw in order to suit immediate ends; but does that in any way explain his virtues, or why it is that painters of undoubted sophistication honoured him in his lifetime and have continued to do so ever since?

"Why did he look at what he saw in such a way? ... What was he remembering? ... It is time to unveil the mysteries of an art that all provokes us now, almost a century after it entered the lists, and that he never stopped amazing the world. ... How refreshing it is after so much whimsical speculation to be reminded of Picasso's no-nonsense summary: 'Rousseau was not a naïf who was better than the others, but a genius of a colourist who was a naïf.'"

This is the right emphasis. It would have been valuable to hear more in a practical way about Rousseau's virtues: his unique sense of colour or his daredevil compositional skills, both of a large and on a small scale — but Le Pichon has, unfortunately, allowed too many other, less profitable notions to intrude. For all the research and sleuthing that has gone into the making of this book, we are left in the end with the same tired old picture of Rousseau as "haphazard" autodidact and enchanted fool. Ironically, the subject himself, who had the useful knack of roasting any kind of "condescending" mocking, damning or favourable, might as well have been delighted by his sumptuous presentation of a book such as this — the accolade of accolades. He deserves a better text, though.

The secrets of failing lives

Alan Hollinghurst

ALICE MUNRO

The Moons of Jupiter
 233pp, Allen Lane, £7.95.
 0 159 1549 8

In her previous, prize-winning book, *The Beggar Maid*, Alice Munro wrote a set of short stories which were all about the same person: it was a fascinatingly suggestive procedure, resembling a highly elliptical novel, and yet one which absolved her from the novelist's obligation to account for life through a large sweep of narration. Each story was modestly inconclusive, and yet such as Munro's instinctual economy and finesse that the final impression was of a masterly grasp on life. She did nothing ostentatious, and inspired complete trust. More than this, her halting, discrete forms implied an intimate truth about the human capacity for fiction, for screening and containing episodes of a painful or discordant life in stories to which memory gives something of the shape of artefacts.

This concern becomes more explicit

in her new book *The Moons of Jupiter*, a collection of eleven stories which, though all sharing Canadian settings, have no formal principle of interrelatedness. Even so, moving from early childhood to a present of broken marriages, dying parents and disaffected children, they create a coherent world. Their provinciality is essential to their effectiveness. The first two stories are complementary, and evoke the contrasting characteristics of the maternal and paternal sides of the narrator's family: the visiting maternal cousins who bring their vulgar exuberance into the unfashionable small town of Dalgleish, and the paternal spinster aunts, living in the ascetic isolation of their sequestered and bookless farmhouse.

In the final, title story, which returns again to Dalgleish, the narrator contemplates the death of her father in hospital at the same time as her own adult children move incessantly away; and again we experience a look in two different directions, at different kinds of lives incapable of communicating with each other, all provincially small, compromised and visibly failing.

It is from this pervasive loneliness that the need to tell stories arises. In

one tale, "Hurd-Luck Stories", the muddled-up characters compulsively relate their failures and mistakes to each other; but mostly the stories which Munro's characters want are each others'. They need the gratifying shape, the determining detail, of other lives as a way of compensating for being unable to control or comprehend their own. Hence a tendency to speculation is diagnosed, a small community's need for gossip, the easy pity or disdain for other lives laid bare.

What gives Munro's stories their resonance is a recognition we share with her that these motives and strategies are bound up too in the novelist's art, and that the obscure problems and palpable self-deceptions of her characters can find a ready parallel in story-writing, which is itself a vindication of understanding, a claimed mastery of experience. There is a deep ambiguity about this book — though one felt on the pulses rather than in an intellectually playful way: her writing has a penetrating concision, at once watchfully spare and lyrically intense, which contradicts or refuses the too facile satisfaction of accounting for everything. She seems festidiously to question the very trust she inspires.

like Lydia in the story "Dulse", constantly fabricating explanations which she does not herself believe.

The greater shapelessness, the stronger melancholy, of *The Moons of Jupiter* are indicative of an increased reluctance to explain, to validate experience through the spurious elegance of literary form. The stories repeatedly conjure with secrets — love-affairs, undignified desires, remembered peccadilloes — which they are built around and yet do not wholly disclose. Warmth brings about a new attitude where "I no longer believe that people's secrets are defined and communicable, or their feelings full-blown and easy to recognize". Despite appearances, people are not puzzles "so arbitrarily solved". "It is impossible for me to tell with women like her whether they are as thick and dead as they seem, not wanting anything much but opportunities for irritation and contempt, or if they are all choked up with gloomy firs and useless passions."

Yet for many of the characters the curiosity after secrets is intense. In a gripping story, "Mrs Cross and Mrs Kidd", an elderly lady in a home takes over a younger man who is unable to

speak after a severe stroke. Mrs Cross excites in the wheelchair-bound Jack a need to have his story told, the few crucial facts of his emotional life spelt out; at the same time, relying on imperfect gestures and ravaged inexpressiveness, he comes to resent his childish humiliation by Mrs Cross's bid for power over him. In parallel we are shown how the younger relatives of the institutionalized Mrs Kidd celebrate in her a supposed "precocity", normally admired in children, a "fond and necessary" notion of her "brightness, her fund of knowledge ... all the ways in which she differs from the average".

Convenient illusions about others, here and throughout this very poignant book, are fostered back and forth in time. Over and over there is a search through the past, and through past images of a future itself now past, for something secret, essential and explanatory which eludes detection. "He recalls Roberta's first visit to his house ... She seemed to him courageous, truthful, without vanity. How out of this could come such touchiness, fearfulness, weariness, such a threat of collapse he cannot imagine. But the first impression is worth respecting, he thinks."

Assault by letter

L. T. Lyham

MAGGIE ROSS

Milena
 280pp, Collins, £8.95.
 0 00 222 602 2

In 1922, four years before his death, Franz Kafka began a correspondence with Milena Jesenska, who had begun translating some of his stories into Czech and whom he had met once through mutual friends in a Viennese café; he was thirty-eight, she twenty-four. He was trapped in the self-imposed solitude of literary work — "my one desire, my single calling"; she in a dissolving marriage. Letter writing was thus the perfect medium, for both of them, through which to conduct a childlike, that is an important element in his work, but I remain unconvinced, or at least untouched, by his heavily Freudian attempt to interpret his subject's career as the reconstitution of a childhood that was in reality loveless and lonely.

Kafka's letters, from Meran and Prague, to Milena in Vienna, remain more or less intact. Her letters to him have been lost, and in *Milena* Maggie Ross seeks to redress this balance. For here it is Milena who is the focus, not only of the author's attention but also of that of her main character, Amy, in a sense, *de Milena*; in another sense, she is Maggie Ross. The novel begins: "She had been thinking about Milena for a long time now. Whenever she saw the book, the face on the cover, she was moved to open it again." On the front of this book, too, as a further allusion (or illusion) is a picture of Milena — or is it Amy?

As an artist, she embarked on a passionate recreation of the life of Milena in the form of a panelled collage. She has also just begun to illustrate the work of an expressionist writer called Frank with whom she met once through mutual friends. ... Their correspondence, like their lives, reflects that of Milena and Kafka's, though this time it is Amy's letters that are preserved, albeit in snatches. Frank's letters are reported; their content is identical to that of Kafka's letters to Milena.

Ross's novel, then, is the collage of a collage: a complex interweaving of fiction with fact. Despite the self-conscious convolutions of the novel's framework, the story of Amy and Frank and of Amy's life with her husband, Ernest (yes, it's a falling marriage) among the café society of an unspecified European city (implicitly Vienna), fits a forceful and evocative life of its own. Amy represents vitality, she feels and acts; her letters are an assault on the fortress of solitude of Ernest. "What she should give him was the will to live, and the promise that his being could be joyful." For Frank, like

Kafka, is not only walked in by words — with the written word his sensitivity could be protected from physical contact — but by the unassailable protection of terminal consumption. As Kafka pointed out in his letters to Milena, just as the healthy have no time for the sick, so illness excludes those that are well. Ross skillfully makes this point through the competing illnesses of Amy and Ernest: Amy's as a way of identifying with Frank, and Ernest's, when he realizes he might be losing her, of attracting Amy's concern.

But while Frank's existence is essentially life-denying, Amy's and Ernest's are robust and lustful. Some of the most interesting scenes in the novel take place in bed, where Ernest is at his most masterful, manipulative and loving, Frank (on the few occasions when he meets Amy) at his most vulnerable, fearful and self-loathing. Amy is deliciously transported and suspicious of the one, while being frustrated by and tenderly solicitous of the other.

Insecurity and immobility in the real world are thus poised against the

apparent strengths of confidence and action. In the internal world, though, these attributes are turned on their head — the over-fastidious, enamoured Franz/Kafka lives on in the work of the artist and, by extension, in the imagination of this novel. Ironically, the character that Ross and Amy most want to celebrate remains insubstantial. Though the details of Milena's life after Kafka's death — her championship of the Jews in Czechoslovakia, her fearless journalism, her will to survive a concentration camp — are compelling to Amy, the collage is never finished (it is barely begun), and the book ends before such associations between Amy and Milena are developed.

The novel is so closely interwoven with its sources (Kafka's *Letters to Milena* and Marguerite Buber-Neumann's *Milena to Kafka*) that the reader of it enters a disturbing world of mirrors. It is a measure of Maggie Ross's ingenuity that she has managed both to superimpose and separate the various images. Unlike Amy, she has completed her "collage" with finesse, though its final resonances may not be quite what she intended.

The War Photographers

Working with one eye closed or heads buried under their drapes, they focus to preserve the drowned shell-hole, the salient's rubble of dead, the bleached bones of sepoy torn from the earth.

Their stills haunt us — a stretcher piled with skulls at Cold Harbour, graves in a barren wood that in one hour's carnage lost its name — to history and the world's memory of death.

The worst has happened, they confirm the worst: but show us too the makeshift hospital, the sad errand of the hospital van among the ruins. Also enough of sky to suggest the infinity of angles,

that behind sandbags, under the hostile towers someone is finding time for a wry note on bowel movements, an entry that affirms the loved salience of what is always there: flower of Auschwitz, bird of the Western Front.

Frank Ormsby

Common decencies

Anne Duchêne

KATHARINE MOORE

Summer at the Haven
 158pp, Allison and Busby, £6.95.
 0 85031 511 5

To have publication of one's first novel, a story of emblematic lucidity and enjoyment, coincide with one's eighty-fifth birthday is really to reverse the proprieties, by offering the world a small celebratory gift. Katharine Moore, to whom this has just happened, has published before several books: about *Northanger* (two stories for children, and a thirty-year correspondence with the late Joyce Grenfell, called *An Invisible Friendship*). Whether or not this short novel is based on her present experience, as one has to wonder, it certainly draws on a long accumulation of goodwill, forbearance and laughter.

It is about one summer at the Haven, a retirement home, where eight old ladies live among relics of their past, administered by a gruff female warden and "what resident staff could be scraped together". The old ladies, raised as gentlewomen, are gentle with each other, respecting a common, fierce desire for privacy. The darker implications of their situation — one of them has to be removed to a geriatric ward when delusions of living in her own past become incommensurate to the warden — are kept at bay by courtesy and cooperation. Mrs Thornton — to whom the author seems closest, though she strives to spread her sympathy fairly — reads the sporting news to Miss Norton, whose sight is failing; also Shakespeare, to whom Miss Norton has felt loyal ever since she cycled to the theatre in Stratford (the one with "an outside staircase by the river") with her mother, before the 1914 war, when "the honeysuckle smelt so nice in the hedges". Mrs Perry and Miss Dawson are virtually surprised into friendship by common dislike of the warden's cat, which sleeps on Mrs Perry's flower-beds and kills Miss Dawson's birds. (Later, Miss Dawson kills the cat: the novel is not without incident.)

The author's dispassionate but benevolent eye embraces almost everything about this microcosm, the well-meaning committee which overrules and supports it, the vicar singing hymns on his "push-bicycle". Mrs Perry's student grand-children and their Oxford friends. On the other hand she says nothing to mitigate the acerbity with which she views the one distant resident, Miss Ford, whose parents "believed her to be the prettiest and the cleverest little girl in the world, and as soon as she was old enough, which was remarkably soon, she fully agreed with them. Nothing

was thought too good for her, but unfortunately this resulted in nothing being quite good enough."

Into this, as temporary help, comes Tom, a "lad", officially ESN but of a Blakean candour and innocence. Tom admits no distinctions of rank or property — can cut one old lady's flowers to give another, and still disarm both — and has a mysterious way with animals. We have to see him (and it isn't too difficult) as a small Pan, momentarily tethered. Mrs Thornton, at the book's end, has a blissful dream of his leading the dance, with pipes, of all those she has loved, and awakes, in the final line, to "a sense of her own blessed irrelevance". "*Tout va bien, un an*", Malraux said: every old age is an admission of what may have lain long concealed. By which criterion, this author earns only our admiration, and her great-grandchildren our envy.

S.T. HAYMON

1982 Winner
 Crime Writers
 Association
 Silver Dagger
 Award

RITUAL MURDER

"The author doesn't put a foot wrong"
 T. J. Binyon, TLS

"Surely one of the best mystery novels of the year... richly textured in character and atmosphere, elegantly written, and beautifully paced until its chilling finale... a brilliantly crafted novel of detection"
 Jean M. White, *Washington Post*

Constable

commentary

Images of the little world

Richard Combs

Fanny and Alexander
Lumière Cinema

What is most striking about Ingmar Bergman's *Fanny and Alexander* is its sense of space – not the great outdoors but a series of roccoco interiors, opening endlessly out of one another in eye-catching, deep-focus vistas. It is as if Bergman, for so long the high priest of a confessional cinema, needing only to lock two or three faces together in anguished dialogue, had discovered in this, reputedly his last film, the dizzying liberation of being an Orson Welles. Not that *Fanny and Alexander* is roccoco on the scale of *Citizen Kane*, but it is unusual for Bergman in that one is made aware of geography and décor before being made aware of the *Angst* of the people who inhabit it. It follows – and it is also a very Wellesian consequence – that one is more aware of the camera as a guide and an eavesdropper, and that the main character, twelve-year-old Alexander Ekdahl, serves much the same purpose.

He is at once central and peripheral, the director's surrogate and sounding board, in the drama but somehow not of it. He drifts rather silently through a film filled not only with the necessary spiritual despair but with much turn-of-the-century froth and gaiety. His presence is our admission to this world but he remains somewhat unmoved within it, a reflecting surface rather than a character. This presence without a voice guarantees a certain detachment, much as Welles uses the opposite effect – his own around but bodiless tones ushering us, along with the camera, into the doomed domain of the magnificent Ambersons. What makes Alexander central, of course, is not what he says and does in the story but the way these events are filtered through his imagination. He is the shadow of Bergman past – an autobiographical connection which Bergman has disguised only to the extent of backdating the film to 1907. But the interest of *Fanny and Alexander* lies in tracing its roots in the Bergman films we already know.

Alexander (Bertil Guve) is fascinated by theatrical illusion, he tinkers with the fear-inducing possibilities of the magic lantern, and his imagination is already stalked by some fierce religious imperatives.

In an important sense, though, all this can be reduced to décor. Memory and experience are schematically divided into two camps – their light and dark sides – corresponding to two different households. The first is the vast Ekdahl home itself, a honeycomb of apartments where the diverse members of the family all seem to live and where they come together at Christmas time in the opulently furnished quarters of grandmother

Helena (Gunn Wållgren). On the forty-third such occasion, Alexander is discovered exploring this magical area – the first of many in the film – with both awe and trepidation. A vivid imagination also involves powerful fears, and the shadow of death soon invades Alexander's life when his father, actor-manager of the local theatre in this provincial Swedish town, suffers a fatal stroke. He and his sister Fanny are then moved to their second habitat, that of Bishop Vergérus (Jan Malmsjö), who officiates at their father's funeral and whom their mother marries shortly afterwards. The Bishop maintains a spartan, spiritually exorcised régime contrasting with the overflowing love

and material opulence of Helena's establishment, and here Alexander's imagination can only get him into trouble.

What qualifies this rather simple dichotomy is the observation that the impulses of art and the impulses of religion are not so different. At the beginning, the children's father makes a speech to his theatrical troupe in which he extols the "orderliness, routine and love" that hold them together – terms which are echoed in the way Vergérus describes his calling. Bergman's career, of course, might be described as a lifelong struggle between these rival vocations. Of all his films to which *Fanny and Alexander*

refers back, it most persistently recalls *The Face* (aka *The Magician*), in which the artifice – even the charlatanism – of art is justified with a *coup de théâtre* rather like a moment of divine intervention. And if art has its religious satisfactions, life also has the dimensions of art. Part of the peculiarity of perspective in the Ekdahl house is that scenes often seem to be framed through a proscenium arch and Helena, herself an actress, tends to reminisce about her life in theatrical terms, about its moments of pathos and "Feydeau farce" that have finally led her to the role of grandmother. Another Bergman ambivalence emerges here: is the "little world" represented by the theatre or by the Ekdahl household a means of making sense of the greater world or a refuge from it?

There is actually a third décor in *Fanny and Alexander*, to which the children, after suffering the privations of the Bishop's régime, are literally spirited away. This is the pavilion of Isak Jacob (Erlend Josephson), Helena's old lover who also proves to be the pre-eminent magician of the piece, his store a wondrous cavern of inexplicable illusions and mysteries. The fact that he is Jewish perhaps signals that Bergman has finally put the devil (in the shape of the Lutheran Bishop) behind him. In Isak's fabulous domain not only is the terror of religion exorcised (here "God" is merely a large puppet who collapses in a heap of limbs and strings) but the deceptiveness of art. The terrors invoked and banished in this section is that emphasize something which has been fleetingly evident in Bergman before, the extent to which he is willing to employ stock Gothic paraphernalia.

Fanny and Alexander may be a Bergman compendium (and, at three hours cut down from its television debut, of five hours, occasionally a rather baggy one), but the film it most brings to mind is *The Shining*. This is not just a matter of spookiness, but the way the Overlook Hotel in the latter is also a "little world" which represents the greater, of the way both films are furnished to convey both claustrophobia and something universal and limitless. Somewhere between the ebullience and seasonal good cheer of the scenes at the Ekdahls and the forbidding precincts of the Bishop's palace, Bergman passes from the glories of space in Welles to the metaphysics of place in Kubrick. One might even note that the twin girls who haunt the hotel corridors of Kubrick's film reappear in the story Alexander fabricates about having seen the ghosts of the Bishop's previous wife and two daughters. Alexander/Bergman is the boy with the "shining", and his forty years in cinema are the fragments of the past he has projected into this particular dream.



"L'Enfance de Pantagruel", a watercolour in the exhibition Gustave Doré 1832-1883 at Hazlitt, Gooden and Fox, 38 Bury Street, London SW1 until May 12.

Seventy-five years on: Alfred Austin

The TLS of May 7, 1908, carried the following review of Alfred Austin's Sacred and Profane Love and Other Poems:

It is arrogant, perhaps, to want to seize a writer's pen out of his hand and show him how it ought to be held. But the impulse is due in such a case to the desire to see a good thing made the best of; so it implies a compliment. Mr Austin's poetical equipment is emphatically a good one – not large, not rich in variety, but so far as it goes, perfectly sound and individual. He respects his art and is never guilty of carelessness. It is not in his style or through oversight – it is with grave deliberation that he again and again insists on venturing outside the definite limits of his power.

Mr Austin's enclosure, as we see it, is a highly picturesque place – a small, old-fashioned garden between mellow brick walls, with a sun-dial and a lavender border, and a graceful figure or two in white muslin, where it should always be a fine summer afternoon (about tea-time), and where no loud voice or heated discussion should ever be heard. Now this is a picture that appeals to every one; we all desire such a retreat; and no one could create it more sympathetically than Mr Austin. If only he would let well alone. But he is always spoiling it all by doing something unsuitable to the time and place. Either he is provoking an argument by displaying his contempt for every one outside the mellow brick walls, or he is finding fault with us for our worldliness, or else – and this really is the unkindest cut of all – he is upbraiding us for apathy and indolence. Why, the whole point of the place, we cry at last, stung by these taunts, was that it should

be all serenity and charity and that nothing horrid should ever, ever happen there; and here we are being positively bullied. It is honestly not for our own sake that we mind most, but because we feel convinced that Mr Austin was not intended by nature to be unkind. So, too, in reading his new book we feel that he is not putting his pen to its proper use when he indulges in verbal ornament or in flights of poetical imagination or in outbreaks of patriotism. In these three matters the book contains many misadventures. The least forgivable are those connected with patriotism. We will take one from a poem called "If they dare" written, we are told, though not published, "at a memorable moment, a few years back, when the defensive spirit of the nation was suddenly roused to the highest pitch." This is how Mr Austin's love of his country finds expression:

Plotters insolent and vain,
Must then your servile swarms,
Moored by the unbridged main,
We but laugh at such alarms.
Blinded brigades, to forget
England old is England yet,
And can meet, as once she met,
World in arms.
Come athwart the ocean's crest,
Moh and Mojarah, crowd and Crown!
Slavish East, or shilling West,
Come, and strike at her renown.
Madmen! by your threats I mean
What is it ye hope to gain?
Think of France, think of Spain,
Smitten down!

The Poet Laureate is perfectly at liberty to call every one who is not English as many names as he pleases; but in that case such words as patriotism and national honour, with which he is very free to had better be left alone.

Competition No 121
Readers are invited to identify the sources of the three quotations which follow and to send us the answers so that they reach this office not later than May 27. A prize of £10 is offered for the first correct set of answers opened on that date, or failing that the most nearly correct – in which case inspired guesswork will also be taken into consideration.

Entries, marked "Author, Author 121" on the envelope, should be addressed to the Editor, *The Times Literary Supplement*, Priory House, St John's Lane, London EC1M 4BX. The solutions and results will appear on June 3.

1 The sun shone bright and clear,
A deep stillness in the thickest part of the wood,
undisturbed except by the occasional dropping of snow from the bolly boughs.
The branches of the hollies pendent with their white burden, but still showing their bright red berries, and their glossy green leaves. The bare branches of the oaks thickened by the snow.

2 People who lay ill in bed could see the shine off the ceilings of their rooms, and a puppy confronted with it for the first time howled and crept under the water-butt.
The outhouses were roughly powdered down the windward side, the fetters were half-submerged like breakwaters, the whole landscape was so white and still it might have been a formal painting.

3 A few light taps upon the pane made him turn to the window. It had begun to snow again. He watched sleepily the flakes, silver and dark, falling obliquely against the lamplight. It was like some far-off and beautiful journey westward.

Competition No 117
Winner: Alistair Elliot
Answers:

1 Here, traveller, scholar, poet, take your stand
When all those rooms and passages are gone,
When nettles wave upon a shapeless mound
And saplings root among the broken stone.
And dedicate – eyes bent upon the ground,
Back turned upon the brightness of the sun
And all the sensuality of the shade –
A moment's memory to that laurelled head.

W. B. Yeats, "Coole Park, 1929".
2 Their ghosts are graced, their books are literary floss,
Some of their names – not all – we wear like names –
But, life being short, we rarely read their poems.
Memo source-books now to point or except a rule.

While those opinions which rank them high are based on a wish to be different or on lack of taste.
Louis MacNeice, "Elegy for minor poets".
3 "Only the scholar will remember my five perfect footnotes to a patchwork text.
When, like a single-seater, I am wheeled into the shadow of the hangar, death, Heaven is full of clocks which strike all day.
It is to music we are put away."

Kenneth Allott, "The Professor".

Medbh McGuckian

Winner of the 1983 Alice Hunt Award
The Flower Master

'A highly accomplished poet who has brought something strikingly new to the verse and should not be missed.' Christopher Reid, *The Times*.

'Real poetry is a kind of magic, who shows you and tells you what you don't expect. Medbh McGuckian knows this. Her poems are amazing insights and people, and she is coolly aware, until everything is alight in her words.'
£4

Oxford University Press

A wrangle for a ring

Ann Pasternak Slater

SHAKESPEARE

Twelfth Night
Royal Shakespeare Theatre,
Stratford-upon-Avon

John Caird's production of *Twelfth Night* opens in an atmosphere of brooding impasse. Torpid thunder rumbles intermittently, achieving downpour only at the play's end – cued by Feste's "The rain it raineth every day". A sapless tree of wrinkled polystyrene overhangs the stage. Baren rascals and dry fools roister and languish beneath it, or climb its leafless branches. It dominates both the action and the programme notes. Evidently it symbolizes the fruitless love-quests in the play, where Aguecheek loves Olivia who loves Viola/Cesario who loves Orsino who loves Olivia – a neat little one-way system of Cupid's arrows, designed to keep characters and audience going round in circles. Only time can release us from the irrational directives of the heart: "What else may hap to time I will commit," says Viola towards the end of her first scene, sounding a dominant motif which she echoes later ("O time! Thou most untangle this, not I! It is too hard a knot for me t'untie").

However, the whirligig of time brings in its revenges most pointedly on Malvolio, and it is Emrys James's Malvolio who is at the centre of this production. With justice, he takes the final solo bow and, indeed, the other players emerge as the merest weak echoes of his misguided, elephantine passion. His transformations are sifter, he suffers greater degradation, and exits (in the Lamb tradition) with the greatest pathos. The folly of love is embodied in him most grotesquely, but all the other lovers are touched with madness too. Olivia, for instance, is quickly proved mad for mourning her brother; later she admits baldly enough that she is as mad as Malvolio. Sebastian, too, constantly mistaken for Cesario, and set upon, comments: "Are all the people mad . . . ?" Yet, who he is propositioned by Olivia, a perfect stranger, he accepts the offer on hardly firmer grounds than Malvolio, saying, "Or I am mad . . .". Malvolio's mad pretensions are significantly modified in our minds by John Caird's production that this parallel and others are brought out so clearly.

Failure to engage, embrace, or even understand is underlined in the fatuous non-encounter between Aguecheek and Viola/Cesario. Their fight (brilliantly arranged by Malcolm Ramsay) is a hilarious parody – of a fight and of the events of the main plot. The contestants flourish their

weapons, discard appropriately limp sheaths, grant a great deal in Japanese style – yet come to no firm conclusions. Other equally good vignettes underline the burden of the play. Ilona Secace's fine setting of "O Mistress mine, where are you roaming?" is at once beautiful and tinged with absurdity, as Aguecheek and Sir Toby add their muted, maudlin chorus. The atmosphere of painfully pointless infatuation recurs when Orsino listens to Feste singing "Come away, come away, death." He lies with his head in the startled Viola's lap – visibly suffering, laughably pathetic.

In this careful production the play's homosexual subtext also emerges unexpectedly poignantly. It is plain enough in Antonio's pursuit of Sebastian, and, mistakenly, of Viola/Cesario. But Caird also contrives to bring out more clearly than any reading of the text could achieve the harshness of Viola's assertion to Olivia. As the boy Cesario, she says, "I have one heart, one bosom, and one truth. / And that no woman has, nor never none shall mistress be of it." For a moment, it sounds like a passionate vow of homosexual celibacy and we are precipitated into a darker, less comically tractable world, in which amorous impasse is finally insoluble. Once again, too, this theme of unrequited barren love is reiterated in the programme's lavish quotations from the Sonnets.

Yet if this makes the production sound over-schematic – a diagram of futility – one should add that the comic business is brilliantly staged in a pleasingly unbusy way. Emrys James's strangled attempts to vocalize the inconceivable arranged initials, M.O.A.I. into something remotely resembling Malvolio is very funny. The cross-garters are excellent, too: not much to look at in the way of sartorial extravagance, but evidently tight as a

tourniquet, they cause Malvolio to punctuate his sentences with unpredictable wincing, little semi-colons of scintilla, in all the wrong places. His final exit is also well managed: dignified, dirty, discomfited, he bows stiffly and silently to an embarrassed court. Off-stage, we hear his shouted threat of revenge – a sad display of *l'esprit de l'escalier* he could not otherwise afford to risk.

Daniel Massey's Aguecheek is another excellent performance. Sheepshead, piously-eyed, his upper lip an unbuttoned flap, doggily ambling, he has a vivid tic of tentatively touching back his dead straw hair. In fact, Malvolio and "the lighter people"

dominate the evening, and you leave the theatre wondering, with a mild surmise, why you had ever thought Orsino and Olivia such important characters. Unfortunately this isn't entirely a function of the play's structure. Orsino (Miles Anderson) is best when he speaks little and confines himself to looking ugly and miserable. Olivia (Sarah Berger) looks beautiful, wilful and imperious, but her verse-speaking is incoherent and unnatural. Shakespeare is partly to blame, though: he does badly by both of them in the last act. Only a natural could make "A sister! you are she" sound natural, and little can extract the jingle from "I'll sacrifice the lamb that I do love / To spite a raven's heart within a dove". Viola (Zoë Wanamaker) has also caught some of the Stratford vocal mannerisms, but improves as a pert little Cesario with credibly ambivalent attractions. The set is steeped in atmosphere, but there are too many fussy alterations to indicate different locations. The sky, too, is unnecessarily well-endowed with a selection of swirling clouds, sunsets, crescent moon, lightning, and an extraordinarily crowded Plough. David Hersey's lighting is equally busy – hurrying the audience through a bewildering scurry of nights and days with little evident logic or justification.

But not all the theatrical dressing is over-intrusive. One piece of non-Shakespearean business seems to epitomize Caird's reading of the play. When Olivia sends her ring after Viola, Viola hangs it on the tree that dominates the stage. It hangs there, the only fruit, till the play ends. As thunder breaks and the rain falls, Feste plucks it, singing pointedly, "A foolish thing was but a toy." In this sombre production love is, in Larkin's words, a "wrangle for a ring" – a foolish thing, a toy for a fool to play with.



"Sainte-moulin", a Rabelaisian bronze by Gustave Doré from the exhibition described on the facing page.

Appealing and appalling

Peter Kemp

Bookshelf
Radio 4
The South Bank Show
LWT

William Trevor dramatizes his fiction for radio and television alike: so it seemed fitting that – to mark the publication of his latest novel and a volume of collected stories – he should feature, the same evening, on both Radio 4's *Bookshelf* and TV's *The South Bank Show*.

As is its tendency, *Bookshelf* supplied more adulation than enlightenment. Trevor, Frank Delaney enthused, has appeared in "all the prestige publications"; "a man whose writing was once described as being perhaps too perfect", he has won "almost unreserved critical approval". Unreserved uncritical approval was what he came in for on this programme. With talk of short stories being "perfect free-standing little statues" and a novel having "movements as sad and considered as requiem music", a hushed, vaguely pious awe was intimated to be the most appropriate response to Trevor's writing.

An extract broadcast from one of his most characteristic pieces, "The Blue Dress", offered a likely opening into an exploration of his fiction. But the programme failed to take it. Sitting back undemandingly, it contented itself with nodding agreement to Trevor's remarks about how the truth derived from his "relentless pursuit of the truth". Never displaying much of this himself, Delaney kept up an assiduous patter of applause. As commentary on Trevor's fiction, he produced nothing more penetrating than the view that there are "divisions of work" within it, since – consisting of "long novels and short stories" – it sometimes portrays the Irish and sometimes the English.

The latter dichotomy, it emerged from *The South Bank Show*, isn't Trevor himself would take seriously. National and political categorizations, he declared there, seem to him "a bit crazy". "I think people are divided into those who read and those who don't read", he amusingly asserted, adding twinklingly that, for him, other significant distinctions were between drinkers and non-drinkers, gamblers and non-gamblers. Slide-stepping such nihilistic deflections and by-passing Trevor's less revealing disclosures – as that he got the idea for a story about a boy and a matron on a train after seeing a boy and a matron on a train – Bragg pursued a quite purposeful line of inquiry. Attempting to establish the nature of Trevor's fictional world, he suggested that – containing a "recognizable cast of characters" given to a "distinctly literary turn of phrase" – it is notably keen on generating "conflicts that are very embarrassing".

Extracts from films of Trevor's stories emphasized that this was the case: little girls sat frozen-faced as a primly-spoken teacher confronted them with a newspaper report of multiple rape; a young woman fled from a bedroom, pursued by a madmaster's wife stiffly cloaked in distasteful disclosures. "Embarrassment interests me very much", Trevor conceded at one point. True to this, his books – the products of an *aficionado* of discomfiture – particularly relish clashes between the sordid and the sedate. What makes his characters as "recognizable" as Bragg indicated is that they tend to be precariously genteel folk trying to keep the disreputable at arm's length. It is here that Bragg's observation about Trevor's dialogue is pertinent. His narrative prose – have a mannered, pedantic quality; they are written in what Trevor revealed on *Bookshelf* is "very old-fashioned Edwardian Irish". This idiom is doubly important to Trevor's work: it is the verbal means by which his characters try to veil unpleasant truths – a conversational equivalent, to use a term, to And,

especially in the earlier books, it is used to attempt satire by counterpoint: starchy phrases emphasize the grubby nature of the dirty linen tumbled out so regularly by the narratives. Trevor's plots juxtapose the nice and the nasty. Decorously handling squalor, his prose does the same.

In recent years, as Bragg pointed out, Trevor's work has apparently undergone something of a change. The early prankishness has quietened down; there are, for instance, far fewer characters with facetious names. Increasingly, Irish political material has been dropped into the stories, with sectarian slaughter replacing sexual scandal as the means of exploding a depth charge in some quiet backwater. But, though the appealing and the appalling now collide more hideously, the same tone prevails. Treating of atrocity and agony, the narrative voice retains a demure formality. Neither *Bookshelf* nor *The South Bank Show* touched on this, but a question surely raised by Trevor's later work is whether a stilted prose can offer anything but a very wobbly progress over the rough ground of recent Irish history.

Among recent issues of literary journals, *critical quarterly*, volume 5, number 1 (Spring 1983), available from Manchester University Press at £3.50, includes essays on the novels of John Fowles by Robert Campbell, Coleridge's "language of consciousness" by Edwin Webb, *The Mayor of Casterbridge* by R. P. Draper and Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy* by Richard Proudfoot, as well as book reviews and poems by Craig Raine, Charles Tomlinson, Louis Simpson and Roy Fuller. The Spring 1983 issue of the *American Scholar* (Vol 52, No 2, available from 1811 O Street, NW, Washington, DC 20009 at \$15 a year) contains essays on "Cultural Literacy" by E. D. Hirsch, Jr., "Patterns of Fiction in Ancient Biography" by Mary K. Lefkowitz, "Out of the Swin with Barbara Pym" by Ian Kapp, and Ernest Gellner on A. J. Ayer's *Philosophy in the Twentieth Century*.

New Oxford books: Literature

The Modern American Novel
Malcolm Bradbury

Here is an up-to-date, comprehensive study of major authors, tendencies, and movements in American fiction from the 1880s to the present day. Professor Bradbury discusses the cultural background to writers from Dreiser, Crane, and James to Vonnegut, Pynchon, and Erica Jong, emphasizing the close relationship between European and American writing. £9.95 OPUS

The Diary of John Evelyn

Edited by John Bowle

'An age of extraordinary events, and revolutions' is how John Evelyn's epitaph describes the period in which he lived. This selection from his diaries spans nearly the whole of his long life – from 1620 in the reign of James I to 1706 in the reign of Queen Anne – and covers the transformation of England from an enterprising but still minor country on the verge of empire to one of the great powers of Europe and the world. £18.50

The Poetical Works of Robert Browning

Editor: Ian Jack

Volume 1 *Pauline and Paracelsus*
Edited by Ian Jack and Margaret Smith

Almost a century after his death, there is still no satisfactory edition of Browning's poems and plays. By systematically collating all MSS and early editions the editors hope to have established a definitive text, or to have come very close to that ideal. Each of the poems is preceded by a long and detailed introduction, and the text is fully annotated. £45

Wycliffite Sermons

Volume 1
Edited by Anne Hudson

The complete cycle of which this is the first volume is the most extensively presented vernacular text (apart from the Bible translation) produced by the followers of Wycliff. Early critics ascribed the cycle to Wycliff himself, but this now seems unlikely. The cycle survives in whole or in part in 31 manuscripts. The sermons present a comprehensive view of the teaching of the sect, reflecting his concern with theological, ecclesiastical, social, and political issues. This new edition will appear in four parts. £80
Oxford English Texts

Dublin

Compiled by
Benedict Kiely

Illustrated £4.50 Small Oxford Books

Boating

Compiled by
Christopher Dodd

Illustrated £4.50 Small Oxford Books

Oxford University Press

remainders

Eric Korn

I flew up last week to the People's Independent Jamahiriya of Hay-on-Wye, to pass judgment on what has been described as the most exciting and authoritative literary find since the Tablets of the Law. This is of course the all-revealing diary of John Payne Collier, the Shakespearean editor and renegade of documentary evidence (see TLS, April 22). Since Collier lived for a long time (1789-1883) and filled a notebook every week, the task was daunting, but I was undaunted. I quote at random:

July 12th 1850. Went to Farringdon Road. Picked up a fine Sha. 2nd folio for eleven pence. Wide empty margins - ideal for my purpose.
July 13th. Practising my Bacon signature. Keeps coming out like Perkins. May have to revise my plans.
July 14th. Bitten multitudes? Basement multitudes? Bison Multitudes?

It is, one feels, material of such historic importance that it must be published whether or not it is genuine. However I advised Panhandle U. to hold their presses for a while, as there are a few things that need to be cleared up. I was very doubtful of the authenticity of a pencilled note on a loose sheet of paper, apparently in another hand: "but out of our usual run but I think it should fool our customers. Yours as ever TJW." But if Wise's note is a forgery, then...

Frederick Mitchell's *Tried and Tempted in Every Shape or Form* (E. J. Larby, n.d. 1919) starts off well, with a frontispiece of the author in two of his most successful disguises, as a nun and as the village cripple, and gets better, and better, which is to say more and more improbable. Mitchell was an apparently rather successful jockey who lived in that part of France that was overrun by the German armies in the first days of the War. For several months, by his own account, he made a nuisance of himself to both sides (not in itself, a reprehensible activity) by crossing and recrossing the lines, which were then quite fluid, mostly on a bicycle, and upsetting his family and the authorities. On the title-page he describes himself as "Frederick Mitchell (the Anglo-French jockey who carried despatches through the German lines at the most critical moments of the Great War)", but there isn't much in the text to suggest he was working for anyone in particular, or doing anything more than trying to get a good view of the downfall of civilization. He does carry a message from the Mayor of Gouvieux to the Prefecture of Police in Paris ("what the real purpose of that note was I may never know, but I am very certain that it was of the utmost importance"), but thereafter only seems to take domestic letters that he drops in the post, bringing back tobacco for the occupying Germans, to tell their suspicions and torments to newspapers: "Mitchell," he said in a low voice, "the German nation is doomed. England has turned against us." Thereafter he continued to wander about, often in eccentric disguises, usually taking his young son with him to do the talking, as he himself had an unmistakable British accent, periodically getting arrested and released as a harmless lunatic.

He seems to have run a few errands for the running services, and writes memorably: "Hil When the final roll call comes, if it ever does, we shall know what these ladies have done for us." Towards the end of the book he seems to feel that the narrative has gone a little flat. He explains that he has passed through the lines so easily that he had a secret code ("4K") given him on a whim by a German officer: "though he was a Hun, he was the only one I have ever met who had some human feeling." The benign Boche also gave him a special brooch, "one of which was given to each of the leading spies." I have been put to all kinds of tortures to make me tell them where and who gave me the code. But no, I would not give way and by doing so they realized I should be true to them," says Mitchell; thereby bewildering any remaining readers. This is almost the last page of the book and there's been no hint of any of this before. But there's a picture

of the secret spy badge, "a beautifully designed brooch or scarf-pin composed of refined gold and lustrous pearls, bearing the Imperial Coat-of-Arms, the sinister Death's Head, also the Royal Star enclosing the letters K.E." (In fact the second letter is not an E but a Greek capital S. It appears to be a frat pin.) There are also pictures of his dogs, his Jockey Club license, and a note from Theodore Roosevelt, whom Mitchell calls "soldier, sailor, linguist, scholar and 'white man'": he has an idiosyncratic way with inverted commas.

On the last page of all he remembers that in German-occupied towns he saw dead babies hanging in butcher shops. "The people who disbelieve me will be of the kind who refuse to accept evidence of any sort. It is fortunate they are but few in number."

You wouldn't want to be one of them, would you?

WE ARE GIVING YOU A \$7.50 BOOK FOR FREE BECAUSE WE THINK YOU WILL WANT TO CARRY IT.

Well, yes if I can have something opaque to carry it in, the book being Margo Woods's *Masurkabat Tantra and Self-Love* (Omphaloskepsis Press, San Diego). "One of those extraordinary happy books that comes along just when you're beginning to feel that sex is a dark closed room with a door that has no handle," as Michael Perkins of *Screw* magazine felicitously puts it, though presumably staffers of *Screw* are inside the dark closed room trying to get out. You don't need to know anything about the book (reciting the Shiva/Shakti mantram to call the archetypal energies up, and apricot kernel oil from your local health store, that class of chat), but on page 21 there is a striking phrase: "I had just read Dr. R's book, and thanks to his graphic description of an orgasm, I realized I had never had one." Rarely has the function of the literary enterprise been so clearly illuminated. For orgasm, substitute if you will True Love / an Oedipus Complex / Utopia / an unhappy childhood / a dacha in the pine woods / a boat trip down the Thames / a room of one's own / a fall in front of a train. Candidates are advised to choose no more than three.

Quite unexpectedly, after announcing my disappointment at not having been asked to review *The Memoirs of Cora Pearl* (Granada, £7.95), I received a copy from a very civil person connected with the publishing business. I have to say that the work, which is edited by William Blatchford, or more precisely "edited by William Blatchford" is not the sober document in social history it has been led to anticipate, but a salacious narrative, entirely without redeeming candour, and crammed with lewd encounters meticulously described. (Just leave the usual in the usual place, please.)

I found this old di-

Stop that or I shan't go on.

I found this old diary, Woodley's Mercantile Scribbling Diary and Almanack for 1881, with list of Bankers, Postal Intelligence ("Inland book Post, one halfpenny for every two ounces, and Inter-leave-Postage free") and Inter-leave-Postage.

The first entry was fairly uninteresting. "Went with Miss Herzfeld and James and Sigmund to see Madam Card," to have James and Sigmund mesmerized. Immediately the whole intellectual history of the century got revised: Freud, aged 23, newly qualified, taking an unrecorded London holiday before going on to study with Charcot; William James, 40, already an established neurologist, at a turning point; Madame Card, crucial catalyst or catalyst, unknown to history; pupil perhaps of Elliston or Brad; the phrenomenicists. I could see it all, the modest note, the scholarly pronouncement; the catalogue entry, full of capitals (EPOCHAL DAZZLING ASSOCIATION), the plaque in Hornsey, the stage rights ("Certainly Mr Stopperd, if you think you can handle it").

I looked further, with gradually subsiding fever: James does a good deal of getting met in the park with Miss Herzfeld, so much so that I begin to fear that he may be Mr Herzfeld; there are no mentions of stimulating evenings at the Pearsall Smiths, but a rather drabber social life ("played Billiards. Lost... Went to Wilson's: came home 1.45, half stiffer"). Sigmund, meanwhile, stubbornly fails to leave for the Continent and his fateful rendezvous with Miss R. and the Wolf-Man. There is a Wolf, but he is a baby: "Wolff Leon was circumcised today at 5.20pm. Sam Cohen Sig and Famy present. Bottle of Brandy 5/-"; and later, somewhat anomalously, "Wolff Leon had bacon bone for breakfast". An intriguing reference to "James" ... speculation ... Loo? wasn't an early discussion of anal eroticism: "James came round. Had a game at Speculation and Loo."

Thereafter the whole thing degenerates into mere Mercantile Scribbling: "Went to City 9am. Got sack... Made terms about establishing business... razor stop 1/-... Lizz's uncle died in Golden Square... walked to Hornsey... meeting of Bernard's creditors accepted composition of 3/- in pound".

There is one item of news ("Report today that Czar of Russia was blown up which proved fatal") but the diarist doesn't claim responsibility or even pass comment. There is a trip to broad which is among the most languid in the recorded annals of Recorded Annals.

10th May: Left for Leipzig by 8.25 PM (via Queenboro and Flushing).
11th May: Stopped at Cologne. Went to see Cathedral.
12th May: Arrived in Leipzig about 9AM.
13th May: Left Leipzig for London.
15th May: Arrived London from Leipzig.

He may have been attending the International Nihilist Cabal, or a select meeting of Savants, or even calling on Cora Pearl, but it seems improbable. If the diary can't be presented as a laser-like insight into the intellectual ferment of 1881, perhaps it will pass muster as an enchantingly artless self-revelation in the manner of *Diary of a Nobody*. Aug 2nd looks promising in this regard: "In trying to Lower the Hoods of the Carriage yesterday poor Lizzies Head got caught in between twisted her hat off her head which gave

her such a shock as to cause her head ache for the rest of the Return journey. Commencing near Waltham Abbey."

But there are no other domestic dramas. But stay: "Aug 3rd. James had interesting discussion about religious experience. Sig decided to discover Psycho-analysis. Elders of Zion called in evening to draft Protocols. Cake 2/6."

It reads like an interpolation, alas.

The striking thing about the Wallace / Wallace / Wallechinsky Book of Lists 3 (496pp. Elm Tree Books, £7.95.) is that it has got serious. There is still plenty of bizarre and whimsicality (6 Famous Painters, 6 Movie stars who worked in a barbershop, 6 Sexual Encounters with Extraterrestrials), but the authors have also discovered the political power of the catalogue, the menu, the charge sheet. "Nine close encounters with Richard Nixon" does more to catch the unique flavour of the man than a mile of tape. "13 secret armies of the CIA" is an indictment. "10 US nuclear weapons accidents" is an alarm-bell, "12 laws needed to protect animals" is a programme of action. I welcome the change, and a general increase in definition - though the authors are still over-ready to believe in Newton's dog Diamond (no such animal) and other unsubstantiated good yarns. "9 Airline Near Crashes" is not for airport-lounge reading, but the Boston Molasses Flood of 1919 was doubtless worse to endure than read about - no less than twenty-one people came to a glutinous termination. (For the worst sticky-end pun, however, we are indebted to James Macdonald French, who on his way to the electric chair, suggested the headline "French Fried").

The literary section is full of edification. I had no idea that E. V. Wright's *Gandhy* (1939), a novel (or rather novel) that achieves the letter "e", was now worth a thousand bucks in a dust-jacket, nor yet that Doris Lessing's list of all-time favourite authors includes Idries Shah, Mahmud Shabestari, Ibn al-Arabi and al-Ghazali. Everyone has their own thought-library of eccentric books, but I approve the Book-of-Lists Collection, which includes *Who's Who in Baton-Twirling*, *Manuale di Conversazione Italiano-Groenlandese*, and *Enjoy Your Chamelonee*.

One of the best things about writing a regular or at least periodic piece is that

people write to you and tell you things. I now have a growing file on the editor of *Poetry in Wartime*, more publishers' blunders on Koestler title-pages, and a transcript of part of FitzGerald's *Rubidly* into Maori by Pei Te Huria Jones. "Myself when young did eagerly frequent" becomes "I ahau e tamihiki ana hikaki tohu taku hokohoki ki te taha" which doesn't seem to scan pentasyllabically, though I write in a black-hole-like ignorance of Polynesian prosody.

Despite the plentiful evidence of professional incompetence evinced in these columns, I get very polite letters asking my advice on entering the book business, and some poor deluded persons wish me to employ them or find them employment. They are all clerks in paleography and social history and a working knowledge of ten dead and five living languages; they have diplomatic experience, battle honours, Olympic medals and all the social graces. "Will I do?" they ask diffidently, rather in the manner of Einstein offering O-level maths coaching, or Rupert Murdoch taking on a newspaper reader.

The thought of inviting such golden persons into my cramped and guano-spotted hermit's cellar is embarrassing. ("Do come in, you get to sit in the chair today. If the phone rings I'll go and stand in the cupboard so you can get to it, but I'll have to put these boxes of catalogues on the hat stand if you can just hold these dogs for a moment or two.")

So if you have in mind spending a morning idly collating a few incunables before taking lunch with a corny librarian, I have to warn you that these are cramped times in the book world and even if you apply to the more spacious establishments, it tends to be the case that in addition to all those qualifications you need to display readiness to put money into the business, if not to buy it outright.

Speaking of Mantras, isn't there at that goes TATTVAM ASI - Thou art That? (or TAT). I thought of it when going against the habit of a lifetime, or at least three months. I turned on at early morning television. TV am was taking a well-earned rest, but on the screen a sign of rare self-revelation said COMING UP SOON: BABY-TALK.

Among this week's contributors

ALFRED ALEXANDER is the author of *Operanatomy*, 1971.

MARGARET ALEXIOU is Senior Lecturer in Byzantine and Modern Greek at the University of Birmingham.

MIRIAM ALLOTT is Professor of English at Birkbeck College, London.

MICHAEL BAKER is the author of *The Rise of the Victorian Actor*, and *The Doyle Diary*, both 1978.

NICOLAS BARKER is Head of Conservation at the British Library.

SHIRLEIGH BIRWELL's most recent book, written in partnership with Dominick Graham, is *Fire-Power: British Army Weapons and Theories of War 1904-1945*, 1982.

BRIAN BOND is Reader in War Studies at King's College London.

DAVID BROWNHILL teaches in the English department at Princeton University.

ARMONIE BURTON's opera, *The Bishops of Dublin*, was broadcast last year. His novels include *Earthly Powers*, 1981.

P. N. DAVIES's *Sir Alfred Jones: Shipping Entrepreneur For Excellence* was published in 1978.

IAN DONALDSON's *The Rapes of Lucretia* was published last year.

JOHN DURANT is Staff Tutor in Biology in the Department for External Studies at the University of Oxford.

PHYLLIS GROSSKURT's authorized biography of Havelock Ellis was published in 1980.

TULIO HALPERIN-DONGHI's *Politics, Economics and Society in Argentina in the Revolutionary Period* was published in 1975.

GERTRUDE HUMMELFARNS most recent book, *Idea of Poverty*, will be published this autumn.

ALFRED KAZIN is Distinguished Professor of English at City University, New York. His *An American Procession*, an interpretation of the major American writers from Emerson to Eliot, will be published next year.

IAN KERSHAW is the author of *Popular Opinion and Political Dissent in the Third Reich: Bavaria, 1933-1945*, 1983.

MARGHERITA LASKI's books include *George Eliot and her World*, 1975.

MARY LERKOWITZ's *Heroines and Furies: and The Lives of the Greek Poets* were both published in 1981.

DONALD N. McCLOSKEY's most recent book, *Enterprise and Trade in Victorian Britain: Essays in Historical Geography*, was published in 1981.

PATRICK O'CONNOR is the editor of *A Tribute to Yvonne Priepps*, 1978.

REDMOND O'HANLON has contributed essays to *The Darwinian Heritage: A Centennial Retrospect*, to be published this year.

R. J. OVERY's books include *Lost Nuffield*, 1976.

LEON POMPA is Professor of Philosophy at the University of Birmingham.

CHRISTOPHER RENO's latest collection of poems, *Pea Soup*, was published in 1982.

PAUL ROAZEN is Professor of Social and Political Science at York University, Toronto.

CAROL RUMENS's collection of poems *Unplayed Music*, was published in 1981.

C. B. SCHMITT is a lecturer in the History of Science and Philosophy at the Warburg Institute. His *Art and the Renaissance* will be published shortly.

ANN PASTERNAK SLATER is the author of *Shakespeare the Director*, 1982.

JANIS ROBINSON is Wine Correspondent of *The Sunday Times*.

FRANCES SPALDING's *Roger Fry and Life* was published in 1981.

CLIVE WILMER's collection of poems *Devotions*, was published last year.

MALCOLM YAPP's books include *Strategies of British India: Iran and Afghanistan 1798-1850*, 1980.

'The Battle of Beirut'

Sir, - Permit me to correct a couple of factual errors in the review by Michael Howard of my book *The Battle of Beirut* (April 15). Mr Howard says: "The sitting of Palestinian camps and strongpoints in the middle of the most thickly populated areas she shrugs off as only to be expected." Apart from the fact that I said no such thing, the Palestinian camps in Lebanon were sited, in 1948, by UNRWA on land designated by the Lebanese government; and at that time these sites were well outside Tyre, Sidon and Beirut. These towns have since grown outward and eventually surrounded the camps.

Second, excusing the Israeli use of massive fire power against Tyre, Sidon and Beirut, Howard writes: "The massive bombardments, tactical as well as strategic, of the Second World War - Cassino and Caen as well as Hamburg and Dresden ... all this was justified in terms of saving the lives of our own forces." This is a wholly inept and misleading comparison.

Tyre and Sidon were towns that were swiftly surrounded and cut off by the Israelis in the first hours of the invasion and then submitted to land, sea and air bombardment for twenty-four hours before leaflets asking civilians to leave were dropped. Cassino was not a town but a single strongpoint - the monastery on the hill; the civilian population of Caen, Hamburg and Dresden were not sealed in; and Hamburg and Dresden were not bombed to save the lives of an invading force, which was hundreds of miles away when they were attacked by the Israelis to save lives, because by the time of the most prolonged bombardments (August 5 to 12) the Israelis had abandoned any idea of attacking the city: it was smashed up to achieve a political objective.

Michael Howard describes my book as "a melodramatic indictment". An attack on the PLO that causes so much suffering to civilians, mostly Lebanese, that began because of the shooting of an Israeli ambassador by an anti-PLO group is, surely, melodrama of the blackest sort.

MICHAEL JANSEN.
5 Metaxas Street, Ayios Dhometios, Nicosia, Cyprus.

The Medici Inventory

Sir, - May I ask for space to put before TLS readers an art-historical detective problem? The problem is inherent in the inventory of the Palazzo Medici on the Via Larga, which was taken just after the death of Lorenzo the Magnificent in 1492.

Among the numerous surviving Florentine inventories from the fifteenth century, the complete Medici inventory (alas, not yet published in full) is in fact truly unique. It is uniquely voluminous and detailed; it is unique in the enormous numbers of things being inventoried, emphatically including prices for works of art; and it is above all absolutely unique in attributing a substantial number of Renaissance works of art to named masters.

One may assume, to begin with, that a notary had primary responsibility for the great inventory, since this was the prevailing practice. The sheer volume of the inventory and the numbers of prices given make it certain the notary had a corps of assistants. So much is easy.

But the real heart of the problem lies in the attributed Renaissance works of art and their valuations. The problems have, literally, no parallel in any other fifteenth-century notarial inventory from Florence, so far as I can discover.

It does not seem very likely that a late fifteenth-century Florentine notary would have been able to provide correct attributions of the two

Giottos or the three Masaccios, or more difficult still, to spot the single Pesellino used with five Uccellos to make a fresco-like decoration in Lorenzo's chamber, or for that matter, to spot Botticelli as the painter of a panel used to decorate the bed canopy of Lorenzo's son, Piero. It seems even more unlikely that a second-hand dealer called in to give valuations could also have provided so many attributions.

In my book on the history of art collecting, *The Rare Art Traditions*, reviewed in your issue of March 25, I ventured the suggestion that the whole problem outlined above could be solved by a reasonable further assumption. If the presiding notary had recruited his assistants among the clerks of the Medici bank, then the clerks could have got the artists' names and the payments they received from the bank's records. This seemed to me to solve the whole problem, providing some allowance is made for the bank clerks' probable misunderstanding of some old records of payments, and consequent occasional errors about prices particularly.

My faith in my own suggestion has been shaken, however, by the doubts expressed by Martin Kemp in his most generous and penetrating review. So what solutions do other detectives propose?

JOSEPH ALSOP.
2806 N Street NW, Washington, DC 20007.

The Practice of Reviewing

Sir, - I often have the melancholy feeling, especially when I'm not engaged in it myself, that reviewing is a quite meaningless activity. Had the editor sent a particular book to one reviewer rather than another a totally different review would in all likelihood have resulted. This is particularly true of novels.

Take Michael Hofmann's review of Joseph Roth's *Job* (April 22). He says that its virtues "are more its author's than of the book itself", that it is a transitional novel, and that Roth himself "soon came to dislike it". But what he mainly seems to have against it is that "the happy ending is as unsatisfactory here as in the Book of Job: material welfare and emotional surrogates as a reward for ritual devotion."

There is much to argue with here. First of all "ritual devotion", in both the Bible and in Roth, better characterizes the comfort than Job himself. Whatever goes on in the bulk of the book, it is hardly ritual devotion. Secondly, Hofmann's remarks make it clear that he has little time for fairytales, or at least cannot see a place for them alongside "serious" literature. The author of the Biblical Job clearly thought otherwise, and many readers over the centuries have agreed with him. I know how many modern rewriters of the Biblical Job story have foundered just here and one of the things I most admire about Roth's handling of the theme is how he manages to combine the realism of the novel genre with the "happy ending", which is, of course, in both the Bible and Roth, hardly a simple version of that motif. Hofmann also contrasts Roth's *Job* with "his best work, *The Radetsky March*", a family epic of great dignity and beauty - an Austrian *Buddenbrooks*. Here again other reviewers might have had different responses. My own feeling is that one *Buddenbrooks* is already perhaps one too many; and as far as I'm concerned family epics, especially those of great density, can stay on the shelves.

Is there a moral to all this? I'm not sure. But it may be Northrop Frye's point that one will always get something out of reading a critic who loves, and admires the work he is talking about, even if ultimately one does not agree with him; while adverse criticism is in the end only the airing of prejudice.

GABRIEL JOSIPOVICI.
60 Prince Edward's Road, Lewes, Sussex.

Siegfried Sassoon

Sir, - Most of Dominic Hibberd's review (April 22) of my editions of Siegfried Sassoon's War Diaries and War Poems is a decent appraisal of the books, but when he sets out to show how much cleverer he is than the poor old editor, he stumbles into a morass of error. One passage of his review reads:

[Gordon] Harbord is the subject of January 1918... on the strength of a diary entry, an early copy (in Texas) is dated August 1917. But there is no diary for the second half of 1917, so one has to guess about many matters, including Sassoon's grief for Harbord.

"Together" is written in the diary immediately after an account of a day's hunting round Limerick on January 30, 1918 (War Diaries, p. 207) and immediately before another poem dated January 31. Clearly the hunting brought the old friend of his youth back to mind. Does Mr Hibberd believe that laments for the dead are written only immediately after their death?

I have not seen the "early copy" (how does Mr Hibberd know it's "early"?), but I feel sure that its "August 1917" refers to Harbord's death and not to the writing of "Together".

As for Sassoon's grief for Harbord, if Mr Hibberd had persevered as far as p. 185 of the War Diaries he would have found a thirty-eight-line poem called "A Wooden Cross", dated August 24, 1917, full of grief, and addressed to Harbord's ghost.

When he comes to the War Poems Mr Hibberd blames me for "want of research into obscure but existing evidence" - to which all-purpose accusation I must, obscurely but existingly, plead guilty. He goes on to say the volume "could have been more thorough. No variant or cancelled readings are given..." To which I reply that the volume is intended for lovers of poetry and admirers of Sassoon, not for all-picking leeches in Eng. Lit.

RUPERT HART-DAVIS.
Marske-in-Swaledale, Richmond, North Yorkshire.

'On the Death of a Fair Infant'

Sir, - There are good reasons why "no one seems to have made... before" Peter Levi's suggestion (Letters, March 25) that Milton's "On the Death of a Fair Infant" is about a sister who died twenty-four years before. This makes it a very belated poem for even the most slowly developing poet. The further proposal that Milton at the end is conceitedly (in the modern sense) referring to himself ignores the future tense - "will an offspring give" (a reference to a pending birth, not Milton's, not from Milton's mother, fifty-three).

The standard modern view remains unshaken, that it was Milton, not Edward Phillips, whose memory failed him in 1673, causing him to think the poem two years earlier than it was. The infant is indeed "Milton's niece Anne, who died at the age of two when the poet was nineteen." Professor Carey's objection that "two-year-old Anne cannot have been the poem's subject, since the 'infant' of whom M. writes did not outlast even a single winter (3-4)" is fallacious. The infant that was buried January 22, 1628, did not outlast that winter, its second. The final two lines allude to the fact that Milton's sister was again pregnant. "A second daughter, Elizabeth, was born a few months later (baptized 9 April) and was the child whose arrival the poet hyperbolically predicts" (W. R. Parker, *Milton*, p. 738).

EDWARD LE COMTE.
North Egremont, Massachusetts 01252.

Sir, - Edward Phillips, Milton's nephew, explained in 1694 that the fair infant of Milton's poem was the child of Milton's sister. On December 17, 1936, W. R. Parker, announced in your columns the discovery that Anne

Phillips, Milton's niece, had been buried on January 22, 1628, and argued that she was the fair infant of Milton's poem. The implication of this identification is that Milton's date for the poem - *anno aetatis* 17 (ie. between December 9, 1625, and December 8, 1626) was incorrect. Now Peter Levi (Letters, March 25) suggests that Milton's date is correct, and tries to dismiss Phillips's explanation on the grounds that he is not reliable.

Milton is similarly unreliable. In 1645 he dated "In Obitum Procellarii" *anno aetatis* 16 (ie. 1625), but the man whom the poem commemorates died on October 21, 1626. "Fair Infant" was not printed in the 1645 *Poems*, and Milton only attempted to recall the date when he decided to include the poem in his 1673 *Poems*. It is surely much more likely that Milton got the date wrong half a century later than that Phillips manufactured the association of the poem with his own sister. And the powers of the offspring of the penultimate line to confer immortality on the mother's name do not point, as Levi suggests, to the identification of the offspring with Milton himself. When Anne Phillips died her mother was pregnant, and this child (Elizabeth, baptized April 9, 1626, buried February 19, 1631) is the promised offspring. The promise of the last line is an adaptation of the promise of Isaiah (lv. 5) to give an everlasting name to the barren.

As for the significance of the seven unrhymed lines in *Lycidas* (Letters, April 8), I fear that the very existence of unrhymed lines in the poem is unlikely. It is usually reckoned that there are ten unrhymed lines (1, 13, 15, 22, 39, 51, 82, 91, 92, 161), but in fact each of these lines is slant-rhymed, and the poem contains no wholly unrhymed lines. There is a detailed discussion of the subject in *Milton Quarterly* 10 (1976), 67-72.

GORDON CAMPBELL.
Department of English, University of Leicester.

Verse in Translation

Sir, - It might be worth reminding readers that *The Oxford Book of Verse in English Translation*, which I edited in 1980, was, like Richard Stoneman's *Daphne into Laurel*, largely (though not entirely) concerned with the role of classical translation. Robert Wells in his review of Stoneman's book (April 15) instances a number of examples - Chaucer's *Virgil*, Sisson's *Carmen Saeculare*, Golding's *Metamorphoses*, Jonson's version of Horace's ode to Venus, Allen Ramsay's and Philip Francis's Horace, Panshawe's and Beaumont's translations. Gifford's *Juvenal* all of which appear in the Oxford book. Indeed, Wells's phrase about a "largely forgotten tradition" seems to echo my introduction: "I have tried to reveal a largely forgotten literature." Mr Wells says of *Daphne into Laurel*: "The need for such an anthology has been felt for a long time." I am sorry that he did not see fit to acknowledge the existence of *The Oxford Book of Verse in English Translation*, and would like to inform your readers that it will shortly be available in paperback.

CHARLES TOMLINSON.
Department of English, University of Bristol, 40 Berkeley Square, Bristol.

Little Sparta

Sir, - Michael Schmidt has given us (Commentary, April 29) a lucid account of the mess: Strathclyde Region finds itself in following the spoilation of Ian Hamilton Finlay's *Little Sparta*. It will be interesting to see how the Region goes about defending its actions, since so far it has assumed itself answerable to none but its own apparatus.

Strathclyde, urging that Mr Finlay's arguments should at least be given fair consideration: in view of the issues involved; I received in answer a duplicated circular letter, misquoting section 4(2) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act in defence of the Rating

Authority's view that the Garden Temple at Stonypath did not qualify for rates relief - a circular signed on behalf of the delightfully titled "Depute Chief Executive (Strategic Issues)".

Since then the Region has succeeded in making itself a laughing stock without appreciably advancing its purpose, whatever that might be. Clearly, it was never expected that high-handed obscure artist would occasion much comment. Events have shown the fallacy of this expectation, and the taxpayers of Strathclyde have their administrators to thank for an expensive and ludicrous display of petulance which is fast making the Region a byword for philistinism; however, one assumes that the post of "Depute Chief Executive (Strategic Issues)" is unfortunately not an elective one.

The saving of what little bureaucratic face remains is of little concern, particularly since a solution lies easily to hand. The crucial issue raised by Mr Schmidt is whether Strathclyde Region has the moral or indeed legal right to despoil one of this country's principal twentieth-century cultural monuments, simply because it is unable or unwilling to recognize it as such. During the course of the Battle of Little Sparta, Ian Hamilton Finlay made a rhetorical appeal for United Nations intervention; but was this

Following the great U

Donald N. McCloskey

R. C. O. MATTHEWS, C. H. FEINSTEIN and J. C. ODLING-SMEE

British Economic Growth 1856-1973
712pp. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
£37.50.
0 19 82453 5

The use of economic method to solve economic problems is applied economic history. The use of historical method to solve problems about economics in the past is traditional economic history. The possible hybrids are two. If historical method is used to illuminate modern economics and modern economics the result is the German historical school of the nineteenth century, or the national income school of the twentieth. Historical method finds out what happened by using narrative. It tells stories; for instance, the story that the new industries of automobiles, chemicals, and electrical engineering contributed to economic growth between 1914 and 1937 chiefly because their weight in the economy had grown, not because they accelerated in growth themselves (*British Economic Growth*, p. 285). Though to some eyes less pretty than narrative all in words (such as the tale of Britain's alleged peagony in antiquated equipment from its early start), in both statistical and verbal narrative it is the sequence of events that makes the point and persuades the reader.

By contrast, economic method finds out what happened by using analogies, metaphors, and similes. The making of national product, 1856-1973, said to be just like a mathematical operation in which output is a function of inputs of labour, capital, land and their improvements; the working of the market for saving and investment is said to be just like curves representing the demand for new projects and the supply of funds to undertake them. Historians, then, are the epic poets, economists the lyric poets of the past. When economic lyricism is used to sing of past economics the result may be called historical economics, known to its many friends as "climetrics". Historical economics is economics in the service of history.

British Economic Growth 1856-1973 is a double triumph in the hybrids, in historical economics and in the national income school. Largely planned and written by R. C. O. Matthews, it was commissioned nearly twenty years ago by Simon Kuznets and Moses Abramovitz as one of seven studies of growth in industrial countries. The result is mostly a very good thing. True, the story it tells of Britain's several rises and declines in the century past will astonish no one familiar with writings in economic history since the 1950s. And its severely professional standards of exclusion will not invite personal by those who have not. But the thing is very well done. To do history or economics well each by itself is quite hard enough. Even to do both poorly, a common event in economic history, is not easy; and pays badly. To do both well, as Matthews, C. M. Feinstein, and J. C. Odling-Smee have done, is a rare trick.

The book surveys 120 years of British economic growth. Economic growth, you will note, not economic history. Though its range is unfairly broad for such statistical productions, it does not claim to be a rounded picture of economic history; what caused Britain's economic growth, or sometimes, lack of growth, since Victoria's middle age? The authors pursue the answer with the zeal of the Bellman and his crew—and on occasion with similar results—up and down 671 pages of tables, charts, and handsome argument.

The purpose is "to view the postwar period in its historical perspective", and a most admirable purpose it is. A number by itself is meaningless, they argue throughout, and invariably requires an argumentative context in which it may be considered high or low relative to another. To know merely that from 1951 to 1973 the productivity of the economy grew at 1.8 per cent per year, and that gross savings by 1973 were 22 per cent of income and the

profits of capitalists 17 per cent of income, is to know effectively nothing. Significant knowledge requires some perspective, for instance historical: one should know that the growth of productivity in this most recent period represents a great rise from zero growth 1873-1913; or that the saving rate in 1973 was about the same as in 1873 (lower if depreciation is set aside) and much higher than in 1924; or that profits were at their historic low, 40 per cent lower than a century before. The backdrop gives the play its meaning. Against the historical backdrop raised in the book one can tell a tale of Britain not failing to exploit the post-war explosion of technology, of governmental saving not crowding out private, of capitalists not eating up an ever greater share of income. Against an international backdrop, lacking in the book but presumably forthcoming from the larger project, one might tell other tales. The tale-telling is what it means to have a "view" of the economy. Lyricism can be used in writing epics.



Glasgow Central Old Exchange - the first multiple telephone switchboard, reproduced from A Hundred Years Ago: Britain in the 1880s in Words and Photographs by Colin Ford and Brian Harrison (335pp. Allen Lane/Penguin Books. £25. 0 1400 6711 6).

The book is simple in outline, following the simple metaphor of the production function. It measures output; it measures input; then it compares the two. Someone involved must have reckoned that all this would overstretch the attention span of the reader, for the book is tiresomely full of summaries, outlines, and restatements. Economizing on type by simplifying the page with the acronyms GDP, GNP, and PACE is tiresome, too. The book is seldom a positive pleasure to read. Still, in its writing as in most other matters it surpasses the standards of the fields in which it labours.

The basis for it is Feinstein's remarkable reconstruction some years ago of investment and product in the United Kingdom back to the 1850s. The present book can be viewed as a long essay on Feinstein, supplemented by special inquiries where the national accounts do not provide answers directly. The chief answer, and the nearest approach to a unifying theme, is that the record of growth, accumulation, and productivity followed a great U, declining from 1856, touching bottom around the Second World War, and ascending to 1973. The explanations for the U-shape may be summarized in economic petiois as nervous neoclassicism and uneasy Keynesianism. When market forces are necessary for the calculations, they are invoked; when they would embarrass the calculations, they are nervously dismissed (see, for instance p. 104n). The Keynesian machinery of multiplier, accelerator, and the marginal efficiency of investment funds, steady employment, monetarism is interviewed, perfunctorily, but is not engaged. Yet the raw Keynesian argu-

ment is disciplined by doubts that there is always a free lunch to be had from more demand or that there is never a simpler explanation in foreign prices for inflation at home. The output of the domestic economy, the authors calculate, followed the U. Earnings from the non-domestic economy (trade and investment abroad) do not alter the pattern, except for a slump across the Second World War. Only after the war was the input of labour affected by the fall in population growth that had begun during the First World War. Hours of work fell in sharp steps at 1872, 1919, and 1947, allegedly because the bargaining power of labour peaked. Fewer hours meant more intense or better hours: the authors reckon that all the lost output from fewer hours was made up by better hours before 1914, though none after the Second World War. It is harder to discern trends in labour's quality. Changes in the population of women and children in the labour force writing epics.

ment is disciplined by doubts that there is always a free lunch to be had from more demand or that there is never a simpler explanation in foreign prices for inflation at home. The output of the domestic economy, the authors calculate, followed the U. Earnings from the non-domestic economy (trade and investment abroad) do not alter the pattern, except for a slump across the Second World War. Only after the war was the input of labour affected by the fall in population growth that had begun during the First World War. Hours of work fell in sharp steps at 1872, 1919, and 1947, allegedly because the bargaining power of labour peaked. Fewer hours meant more intense or better hours: the authors reckon that all the lost output from fewer hours was made up by better hours before 1914, though none after the Second World War. It is harder to discern trends in labour's quality. Changes in the population of women and children in the labour force writing epics.

ment is disciplined by doubts that there is always a free lunch to be had from more demand or that there is never a simpler explanation in foreign prices for inflation at home. The output of the domestic economy, the authors calculate, followed the U. Earnings from the non-domestic economy (trade and investment abroad) do not alter the pattern, except for a slump across the Second World War. Only after the war was the input of labour affected by the fall in population growth that had begun during the First World War. Hours of work fell in sharp steps at 1872, 1919, and 1947, allegedly because the bargaining power of labour peaked. Fewer hours meant more intense or better hours: the authors reckon that all the lost output from fewer hours was made up by better hours before 1914, though none after the Second World War. It is harder to discern trends in labour's quality. Changes in the population of women and children in the labour force writing epics.

ment is disciplined by doubts that there is always a free lunch to be had from more demand or that there is never a simpler explanation in foreign prices for inflation at home. The output of the domestic economy, the authors calculate, followed the U. Earnings from the non-domestic economy (trade and investment abroad) do not alter the pattern, except for a slump across the Second World War. Only after the war was the input of labour affected by the fall in population growth that had begun during the First World War. Hours of work fell in sharp steps at 1872, 1919, and 1947, allegedly because the bargaining power of labour peaked. Fewer hours meant more intense or better hours: the authors reckon that all the lost output from fewer hours was made up by better hours before 1914, though none after the Second World War. It is harder to discern trends in labour's quality. Changes in the population of women and children in the labour force writing epics.

ment is disciplined by doubts that there is always a free lunch to be had from more demand or that there is never a simpler explanation in foreign prices for inflation at home. The output of the domestic economy, the authors calculate, followed the U. Earnings from the non-domestic economy (trade and investment abroad) do not alter the pattern, except for a slump across the Second World War. Only after the war was the input of labour affected by the fall in population growth that had begun during the First World War. Hours of work fell in sharp steps at 1872, 1919, and 1947, allegedly because the bargaining power of labour peaked. Fewer hours meant more intense or better hours: the authors reckon that all the lost output from fewer hours was made up by better hours before 1914, though none after the Second World War. It is harder to discern trends in labour's quality. Changes in the population of women and children in the labour force writing epics.

ment is disciplined by doubts that there is always a free lunch to be had from more demand or that there is never a simpler explanation in foreign prices for inflation at home. The output of the domestic economy, the authors calculate, followed the U. Earnings from the non-domestic economy (trade and investment abroad) do not alter the pattern, except for a slump across the Second World War. Only after the war was the input of labour affected by the fall in population growth that had begun during the First World War. Hours of work fell in sharp steps at 1872, 1919, and 1947, allegedly because the bargaining power of labour peaked. Fewer hours meant more intense or better hours: the authors reckon that all the lost output from fewer hours was made up by better hours before 1914, though none after the Second World War. It is harder to discern trends in labour's quality. Changes in the population of women and children in the labour force writing epics.

ment is disciplined by doubts that there is always a free lunch to be had from more demand or that there is never a simpler explanation in foreign prices for inflation at home. The output of the domestic economy, the authors calculate, followed the U. Earnings from the non-domestic economy (trade and investment abroad) do not alter the pattern, except for a slump across the Second World War. Only after the war was the input of labour affected by the fall in population growth that had begun during the First World War. Hours of work fell in sharp steps at 1872, 1919, and 1947, allegedly because the bargaining power of labour peaked. Fewer hours meant more intense or better hours: the authors reckon that all the lost output from fewer hours was made up by better hours before 1914, though none after the Second World War. It is harder to discern trends in labour's quality. Changes in the population of women and children in the labour force writing epics.

ment is disciplined by doubts that there is always a free lunch to be had from more demand or that there is never a simpler explanation in foreign prices for inflation at home. The output of the domestic economy, the authors calculate, followed the U. Earnings from the non-domestic economy (trade and investment abroad) do not alter the pattern, except for a slump across the Second World War. Only after the war was the input of labour affected by the fall in population growth that had begun during the First World War. Hours of work fell in sharp steps at 1872, 1919, and 1947, allegedly because the bargaining power of labour peaked. Fewer hours meant more intense or better hours: the authors reckon that all the lost output from fewer hours was made up by better hours before 1914, though none after the Second World War. It is harder to discern trends in labour's quality. Changes in the population of women and children in the labour force writing epics.

ment is disciplined by doubts that there is always a free lunch to be had from more demand or that there is never a simpler explanation in foreign prices for inflation at home. The output of the domestic economy, the authors calculate, followed the U. Earnings from the non-domestic economy (trade and investment abroad) do not alter the pattern, except for a slump across the Second World War. Only after the war was the input of labour affected by the fall in population growth that had begun during the First World War. Hours of work fell in sharp steps at 1872, 1919, and 1947, allegedly because the bargaining power of labour peaked. Fewer hours meant more intense or better hours: the authors reckon that all the lost output from fewer hours was made up by better hours before 1914, though none after the Second World War. It is harder to discern trends in labour's quality. Changes in the population of women and children in the labour force writing epics.

ment is disciplined by doubts that there is always a free lunch to be had from more demand or that there is never a simpler explanation in foreign prices for inflation at home. The output of the domestic economy, the authors calculate, followed the U. Earnings from the non-domestic economy (trade and investment abroad) do not alter the pattern, except for a slump across the Second World War. Only after the war was the input of labour affected by the fall in population growth that had begun during the First World War. Hours of work fell in sharp steps at 1872, 1919, and 1947, allegedly because the bargaining power of labour peaked. Fewer hours meant more intense or better hours: the authors reckon that all the lost output from fewer hours was made up by better hours before 1914, though none after the Second World War. It is harder to discern trends in labour's quality. Changes in the population of women and children in the labour force writing epics.

ment is disciplined by doubts that there is always a free lunch to be had from more demand or that there is never a simpler explanation in foreign prices for inflation at home. The output of the domestic economy, the authors calculate, followed the U. Earnings from the non-domestic economy (trade and investment abroad) do not alter the pattern, except for a slump across the Second World War. Only after the war was the input of labour affected by the fall in population growth that had begun during the First World War. Hours of work fell in sharp steps at 1872, 1919, and 1947, allegedly because the bargaining power of labour peaked. Fewer hours meant more intense or better hours: the authors reckon that all the lost output from fewer hours was made up by better hours before 1914, though none after the Second World War. It is harder to discern trends in labour's quality. Changes in the population of women and children in the labour force writing epics.

ment is disciplined by doubts that there is always a free lunch to be had from more demand or that there is never a simpler explanation in foreign prices for inflation at home. The output of the domestic economy, the authors calculate, followed the U. Earnings from the non-domestic economy (trade and investment abroad) do not alter the pattern, except for a slump across the Second World War. Only after the war was the input of labour affected by the fall in population growth that had begun during the First World War. Hours of work fell in sharp steps at 1872, 1919, and 1947, allegedly because the bargaining power of labour peaked. Fewer hours meant more intense or better hours: the authors reckon that all the lost output from fewer hours was made up by better hours before 1914, though none after the Second World War. It is harder to discern trends in labour's quality. Changes in the population of women and children in the labour force writing epics.

The totality of thoughts

C. B. Schmitt

GIOVANNI SANTINELLO (Editor)

Storia delle storie generali della filosofia
Volume 1. Dalle origini rinascimentali alla "historia philosophica". 527pp.
Volume 2. Dall'età Cartesiana a Brucker. 667pp.
Brescia: La Scuola.

The history of philosophy developed as an independent subject out of the Renaissance's renewed interest in ancient philosophies other than Aristotelianism. Though medieval scholasticism did not eschew Platonism, Stoicism, or other ancient schools entirely, there is no doubt that the synthesis of the high Middle Ages which dominated the philosophies was derivative from some form of Aristotelianism. The fifteenth century saw the development of humanism, which, among other things, brought a more refined historical sensitivity and a determined search for the basic source materials of ancient thought and institutions. From these two spurs there eventually developed both the possibility and the desire to apply the humanist method to philosophical studies as well as to the pursuit of literary and other topics. First, the recovery of Plato's works and of much detailed information on other ancient philosophical schools, from such sources as Diogenes Laertius' *Lives of the Philosophers*, provided the raw material for reconstructing the development of the philosophy in antiquity and for an intellectual evaluation of the philosophies themselves. Second, the humanists' own emphasis on the accurate restitution of the past, based on surviving source materials, led to the imposition of the same method on philosophical materials.

The beginning was slow, and the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries produced only fragmentary results in the attempt to sort out one or another part of Greek philosophical history. During those centuries no one achieved a full-scale history of philosophy properly so-called. Rather, there were various brief discussions (largely after Cicero, supplemented by information taken from newly available sources) of such topics as the varying fortunes of the later Platonic Academy, much of the later Platonic school developed within the Renaissance critique of Aristotle. Sometimes, it was done

primarily for disinterested historical reasons. More frequently, the incentive was to establish priority of claim for a particular philosophical viewpoint. Therefore, Neoplatonist variations, such as a belief in the *prince philosophia* or *philosophia perennis*, which attempted in slightly different ways to establish a temporal and intellectual priority for Platonism vis-à-vis all other philosophies, were based upon a determined exploitation of the available information to establish a genealogy of truth within Platonism. Thus figures such as Agostino Steuco and Francesco Patrizi in the sixteenth century made a special effort to document the continuity of the Platonic tradition from the far distant past to their own times. Much which they accepted at face value (eg, the writing of Pseudo-Hermes) turned out to be of dubious or spurious provenance. None the less, the method they evolved was later refined to provide a more reliable filiation of philosophical schools.

As the authors of the *Storia* point out, this method, which was to lead to the more valid and more comprehensive histories of philosophy of later centuries, originated among a group of sixteenth-century opponents of Aristotle. At the same time, it was part of the revival of the various pre-Socratic schools, which was to have such an impact on Montaigne, Bruno, Telesio, Bacon, Gassendi, and many other initiators of modern philosophical attitudes. This initiative led many encyclopedists, polyhistorians and others to lay the foundation for a proper, comprehensive history of philosophy. In some cases, as with Conrad Gesner, the retelling of history of philosophy was merely part of a more comprehensive aim; in others, it was meant to be a justifying foundation for an effort to establish a new philosophy based upon an ancient one, as with Gassendi's monumental attempt to reconstruct the system of Epicurus from the existing fragments.

By the middle of the seventeenth century, erudition, along with historical and philosophical sensitivity, made it possible to carry things a step further. The first comprehensive works on history of philosophy took form, one written by an English lawyer and poet, the other by a Leiden professor. Thomas Stanley's *History of Philosophy* appeared in London in 1655, gaining for him the epithet *philosophiae historiae conditor*. Peter Lely's portrait of him now hanging in the National Portrait

Gallery. Though covering only ancient philosophy, it was by far the most comprehensive work on the subject up to that date, remaining standard for many years and through many editions, both in the original English and in Latin and Dutch translations. Stanley was himself, both by education and commitment, an adherent of Cambridge Platonism, and, besides his *History* and some English poetry of Platonic cast, he is also remembered for his translations and classical editions. With him began the literary genre of history of philosophy properly speaking. Though Aristotle, Diogenes Laertius, and many Renaissance authors had written on the subject, it was Stanley who was responsible for "history of philosophy" not only as a title but also as a separate discipline.

In the same year of 1655 there also appeared the *Historia philosophica* of Georg Horn, a German professor of history at Leiden, then in its full bloom as a centre for learning. Though far broader than Stanley's work, covering its subject from beginning to end, it did not have the same depth or the same critical acumen as Stanley's.

In this *annus mirabilis*, therefore, the new discipline emerged on two fronts and from two perspectives. It was not long before numerous others wrote similar works. Many of these were more or less disinterested attempts of learned men to provide encapsulated information on the history of thought, while others were put forward as propaganda for one or another school. The subject emerged precisely at the time when Aristotelian Scholasticism was finally on the decline and when the new philosophies of Bacon, Galileo and Descartes were establishing themselves as viable alternatives in the hundred years after Stanley and Horn then appeared. Many new histories of philosophy on canvases large or small and appealing to proponents of many diverse philosophical positions. What developed primarily, however, was a thorough-going, eclectic, and a philosophy which one seldom reads about in our modern histories of philosophy. Historians of the subject have sometimes adhered to, one or another school and have written their history with the particular bias of their own philosophizing. More frequently, however, those who wrote such histories have a full commitment to that subject as a discipline in its own right and end up stranded, like Buridan's ass, in the midst of many competing positions. The result is that many historians make an erudite

eclecticism their philosophical way of life.

The greatest among these, as well as the greatest historian of philosophy down to the present day, was Jakob Brucker (1696-1770), whose *Historia critica philosophiae*, first published between 1742 and 1744 and in an expanded and revised form in 1766-67, put the subject on a wholly new footing. With him eclecticism took on a novel coloration. The sheer comprehensiveness of his compilation made it possible to see the historical development of philosophy within dimensions far broader than hitherto conceived. Not only unfamiliar and obscure Greek schools got their due, but such subjects as Chinese, Japanese and Mosaic philosophy also. Largely forgotten today except by specialists, or even unknown by many philosophers and would-be historians of philosophy, Brucker's work has been - proximately or remotely - the foundation for all later histories of philosophy and is still well worth reading for its information and judgments on many topics and figures.

Brucker himself is an interesting and important figure for many reasons. If Stanley and Horn founded the subject, he brought it to maturity and laid a foundation which had to be taken into account by later practitioners. His major work, running to some two and a half million words (nearly three times the length of F. C. Copleston's treatment of the same time-span), may still be the most comprehensive and extensive treatment of the subject by a single individual. It was written by a dedicated scholar who refused a higher position in life because it would give him less time to devote to study. Brucker died a true scholar's death, tumbling fatally to the ground in a heap while perched on a ladder and reaching for a book on the top shelf of his library.

For Brucker "history of philosophy" was essentially the history of human thought in all disciplines and in all geographical regions. For example, building on the earlier notion of *philosophia perennis* which had come to its culmination in Leibniz, his work includes extensive and informative sections on pre-Greek and "exotic" philosophy, including that from such diverse places as Malabar and Canada. These topics, along with the sciences, theology, jurisprudence, and many other branches of the Renaissance and Baroque encyclopaedia of knowledge, formed a part of the fabric of human thought termed *philosophia*. Still

writing in the Latin which had unified European thought since the twelfth-century Renaissance, Brucker's synthesis was among the last great works in that language. Between the first and second editions of the *Historia*, Kant came to maturity, established German as the fundamental language for philosophical discourse, and moved the subject in a new direction, putting the term "critical" to a different use from Brucker's. The first *Kritik* was less than two decades in the future when the second edition of the *Historia* appeared. Philosophy itself thereupon took a different path, but the study of the history of philosophy as a particular *métier* also became increasingly respectable.

The use and development of history of philosophy by Kant, Hegel, and many others will be the subject of future volumes of the *Storia*, and we can look forward to them in anticipation. What we have thus far is of a high quality and quite comprehensive for a pioneering work. Once again the Italians have taken the initiative in formulating a structure for further work. These volumes, along with earlier studies by Garin, Del Torre and Braun establish a foundation for investigating the historiography of philosophy. Though Stanley was English and both Horn's and Brucker's works were dedicated to Englishmen, the latter to George II, few echoes of this interest have survived into twentieth-century Britain, and the tradition has been continued elsewhere.

These volumes show clearly how such recently popular subjects as history of art and history of science are Johnny-come-lately to cultural historical studies. These, like the studies of the histories of vernacular literatures, are all far more narrowly conceived, placed upon a far more fragile platform for their proponents than was the history of philosophy by Brucker. His predecessors, contemporaries, and successors. For them, philosophy - visualized above all as a broadly based history comprising all periods and schools - was the propaedeutic for "higher" studies such as law, medicine, and theology. This view of education developed from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment. The consideration of the problems it involved the *Bildung* it fostered, the results it produced are perhaps worth contemplating today, when the arts education of modern universities seems to have irretrievably lost its way.

Manifestations of the concrete

Leon Pompa

GIORGIO COLLI
La Ragione errabonda: Quaderni postumi.
Edited by Enrico Colli
671pp. Milan: Adelphi. L. 38,000

From 1955 to 1977 Giorgio Colli kept a series of notebooks, amounting in effect to a commonplace book, in which he worked out and refined his views about philosophy and its history. In *La Ragione errabonda* the editor, Enrico Colli, has edited these notebooks, putting together those parts of them, which appear elsewhere in Colli's writings, except where they are essential to the comprehension of the rest. What we are left with is a mass of fascinating material which goes to the heart of Colli's interests. The contents vary much in style - including aphorisms, fragments and short poems - and in effect it is to reveal the range and depth of Colli's great talents, as well as the extent of his intellectual efforts, in a way that no ordinary book could. *La Ragione errabonda* more than compensates for two unwritten books: one on Nietzsche, the other on Colli's philosophy of expression. For what some of it was a preparation. Despite the international fame which his work on the critical edition of

Nietzsche brought him, Colli occupied a relatively isolated place in Italian philosophy. This may well be because, as his notebooks make clear, he did not share the view, fairly widespread in Italy today, that we cannot abstract from our own historical and cultural position when considering past philosophy. Colli's re-interpretation of the early Greek philosophers, whom he refused to consider as "pre-Socratics", is one consequence of his own view. Another, much more prominent in the notebooks, is his wholesale condemnation of much contemporary philosophy and thought in general. For this, two underlying reasons can be discerned. One is his claim that most post-Enlightenment thought fails to appreciate the essentially abstract nature of reason and can lead only to error - hence Colli's naturalism being seen as a consequence of the "rationalist illusion". A similar, but more disastrous manifestation of this illusion is the series of systems produced by a whole tradition of philosophers, from Leibniz onwards, who have made mathematics their paradigm of knowledge. Alternatively, however, the attempt to avoid the errors of rationalism by embracing irrationalism merely leads to reliance upon the pathological. Thus Nietzsche, under the tyranny of his own *persona*, moved from justified attacks on Wagner and

Christianity to unjustified strictures on all art and all religion whatsoever, while the thought of Foucault and Freud suffers from features which spring from similar defects of character and intellect. Given his alienation from most contemporary thought, Colli's solution was to turn to the work of his predecessors, including, most importantly, the early Greeks; the writers of the *Upanishads*; Plato, Bruno, Spinoza, Schopenhauer and Nietzsche. His reflections on these are learned, subtle and challenging, though they include an enjoyable element of sheer eccentricity. But his heroes also are not exempt from criticism. Nietzsche, again, is correct to have learned from Schopenhauer that man is not distinguished from animals by his reason, but had he read Schopenhauer with more care he could have learned that reason is nothing but a manifestation of animality. And, despite Nietzsche's acid remarks about Hölderlin's lack of scholarship - "he copied from his errant schoolfriends" - Hölderlin "understood the Greek mind better than did Nietzsche".

In the course of these reflections, but also in separate and sometimes quite lengthy discussions, different aspects of the philosophy of expression are worked out. An expression can, in a sense, be thought of as the content of an empirical judgment. Where, on a Kantian view, this would involve the categorization of the given, for Colli it

is a causal manifestation of a more concrete given. This points the way towards the notion of a world which manifests itself through us but which is unknowable to the extent that it is always more concrete than its manifestations. This, in turn, enables the subject-object dualism to be overcome, for if thought has no autonomous rôle to play in the construction of an expression, the subject becomes simply this nexus between the concrete source of all expressions and any series of expressions in which this manifests itself. It is evident, from a conception such as this, that, while imposing definite limitations on what is achievable, Colli is no irrationalist. His attacks on modern rationalism are largely aimed against the view that reason provides forms for the organization of what is given in sense and feeling. His own metaphysics seeks, on the other hand, to show that reason is a manifestation of the sensory. It seeks, in other words, to make man part of a unified world, while acknowledging that it is a mysterious place in which to be. The mystical consequences of such a doctrine are explicitly accepted, though not of course explicated, by Colli.

La Ragione errabonda is a fascinating volume. Whether or not one accepts the philosophy of expression, one cannot fail to take seriously the many trenchant criticisms of, and penetrating insights into,

contemporary and past thought which it contains. Its value for students of Nietzsche is beyond doubt. It will also, however, be of great interest to those who share Colli's dissatisfaction with always more concrete than its manifestations. Beyond this, however, it is an eloquent testimony to the strenuous efforts, made by a gifted but individualist thinker, to make for a philosophy with which he could rest content.

Human Rights: Essays on Justification and Applications, by Alan Gewirth, collects together fourteen essays (380pp. University of Chicago Press. Paperback, £8. 0 226 28878 1); many are contributions to the attempt to establish, "on the basis of a rationally grounded moral principle, that there are indeed human rights".

God among Us: The Gospel Proclaimed

Edward Schillebeeckx
Here is Schillebeeckx speaking personally, in public, about spirituality, about the Christian year, and about the need for social and political change among Christians.
£6.50
SCM PRESS LTD
25-30 Tottenham Road London N1 6 2JL

Voice of the bidonville

James Kirkup

Mehdi Charef

Le Thé au Harem d'Arché Ahmed
183pp. Paris: Mercure de France.
62fr.

The cliché of "Paris Ville Lumière" is far from the truth, as any honest tourist soon realizes. It certainly has no place in this remarkable first novel by a young Algerian immigrant, who describes from the inside the sordid, violent, terror-stricken lives of both immigrant workers and native "whites" in the grim dormitory towns of crowded high-rise blocks in Gennevilliers, Nanterre, Fleury-Mérogis, Bobigny, Colombes, Asnières – those *bidonvilles* the author has no hesitation in comparing with the favelas of Brazil, without the sunshine and the rumbas.

Mehdi Charef gives us glimpses of tourist haunts like Montmartre and the *grands boulevards*, but from gutter-level. The Gare St Lazare, the Gare d'Austerlitz and the Métro are here too, but only as the settings for petty crime, alienation and terror. These areas are, for his attractive young rascal of a "hero", simply extensions of the brutish existence he leads with his family, neighbours and friends, in this frankly and shockingly autobio-

graphical work, whose title is the Arab-French pronunciation of *le théorème d'Archimède* – something the hero cannot master at school.

It is all here, pitilessly yet uncensoriously and even affectionately portrayed through the eyes of seventeen-year-old Madjid and his cousin Pat, a hard case with whom he shares dope, drink, prostitutes and local teenage amateurs just starting out in a life of degradation and misery. They pick pockets in the Métro, clobber and rob on the Pont Cardinet's "lieu de drague péde". They and their friends are permanently unemployed, and unemployable. Schools cannot handle them, and the Youth Club has to close its doors because of their "anti-social" activities. They peddle and purchase drugs in underground parking-lots that are like nightmarish dungeons of rape and robbery for the rich, respectable bourgeois tenants of the luxury apartments above them. The young boys and girls terrorize their own apartment blocks, vandalizing cars, lifts and stairways, breaking into cellars and stealing wine, gang-raping sisters and cousins, sniffing glue on filthy old mattresses in abandoned basements and keeping up a constant stream of shrill, foul-mouthed but often funny talk and primitive social criticism.

Religion and morality have no place in these lost lives, except in the case of Madjid's wonderfully warm, human

mother, Malika, who is constantly invoking Allah, to no effect. She can hardly speak any French, and what she does say is delivered in an accent mocked by young Madjid and his friends, who have been born in France. Her pathetic Arab husband, who has fallen from a roof he was tiling in heavy snow, can no longer work: his accident has affected his brain, and now he sits in front of the television watching the pictures without understanding, as a pet dog might watch them. But Malika still cares for him, and even Madjid helps him back from the *bistrot* where he spends his wordless evenings over a glass of Kronenbourg and a few *Gitanes*. It is Malika who holds her precarious family together somehow or other, against all odds.

It is his own life Mehdi Charef makes us live in this novel. He, too, like so many of his youthful characters, went to the bad and ended up in prison. When he got out, at the age of twenty, he was so traumatized by the experience that he vowed never to return, and fought to make something of himself. He got a low-paid factory job, which he has worked at for the past ten years, and found release from the horrors of the *bidonville* by writing this extraordinary story. His novel is a testimony to endurance, and to the integrity of the Arabs and other immigrant workers still leading lives of terror and desperation in France. His accomplishment brings a breath of hope into an almost hopeless situation.

There have been few good novels, but Pierre Bourgeade's *Les Serpents* is very much about the Algerian war of independence and a very good novel. It tells the story of a French primary-school teacher who is conscripted and sent, after a few weeks' training near Marseilles, to fight in North Africa. Aibin has always lived with his mother and is totally innocent regarding the real world. He soon finds himself in a situation where he has to torture Algerian "rebels". Having sworn to himself he would never do such a thing, he cannot face up to his shame and commits suicide.

There have been few good novels, but Pierre Bourgeade's *Les Serpents* is very much about the Algerian war of independence and a very good novel. It tells the story of a French primary-school teacher who is conscripted and sent, after a few weeks' training near Marseilles, to fight in North Africa. Aibin has always lived with his mother and is totally innocent regarding the real world. He soon finds himself in a situation where he has to torture Algerian "rebels". Having sworn to himself he would never do such a thing, he cannot face up to his shame and commits suicide.

ship at Naples while Bruno's wife Adélaïde is visiting Pompeii. The next few months, a cosmopolitan riot of encounters and journeys, involve Bruno in elaborate deceptions as he moves between mistress and family, uncertain which he prefers. To his wife, this is an "existential crisis". To Romola, depending on her mood and the moment, almost anything: security, affection, passion, emptiness. The narrative takes us around their feelings rather than inside them, and most of the tale is told in dialogue. This has a sort of deliberate banality that is engaging, the contrast being pointed between the bizarre behaviour of Romola (jailed in Rome for taking heroin – casual pick-up with delusions of romance) and the staid, indeed starchy, social attitudes of Bruno, Adélaïde, their daughter Philomène, their tyrannical cook Simone, Mme Giraud the manageress of the shop and everyone else around them.

It is hard to say why *Stella Oceanis* should be so compulsively readable. Its lack of "fine writing" is a pleasure and a surprise in Italian, which so often tends to the florid. Similarly its lack of pretensions, artistic and even philosophical. Here, it seems to say, are these people and this is what happens to them, among them, around them. With her aura of intoxication (in several senses), her lack of cant, the memories we may not be meant to trust (has she really left two children called Nathalie and Olivier, a gloomy Swiss householder, a lower called Yves?), and her alarming demands on commonsensical living, Romola has strayed into a world that can't accommodate her, yet longs to: she seems its poetic underside, its "otherness", considered with the sympathy but wary eye of comedy, a rather elderly *biacchante* still clinging her cymbals at Bruno and the prim Paris of money and tyrannical cooks.

Although *Listeners* often seems to contain material more suitable for Mike and Boon than for Michael Joseph, the author has, at least, potential for novelistic analysis. There are the wives (like Jane) who have babies and thereby keep their husbands. There are the wives (like Stella) who want to have babies but whose husbands don't (isn't it, what a mess, therefore, fall in love with a more fertile woman). There are the wives (like Jennifer) who pursue careers and who have their seemingly supportive husbands to less clever, more malleable females. There are the wives (like Sarah, Jennifer's mother) who have their husbands out of boredom and recognize the need for protection and affection. And there are the women depicting their view of life. The role of the German estate agent (rather different from that of his British counterpart) played out here by the self-doubting Gottlieb Zörn, inspires Walter to portray the world of the economic miracle at its most futile and questionable.

Do we run or stay and fight? The suicide machines on the border, or the black-market rates of five to one?

Michael Hofmann

Conscript and Caïd

Francis Ghilès

Pierre Bourgeade

Les Serpents
271pp. Paris: Gallimard. 69fr.

Azzéline Bounemeur

Les bandits de l'Atlas
187pp. Paris: Gallimard. 59fr.

More than twenty years after it granted independence to Algeria, France remains obsessed by the most irrational adventure of its modern history. Nine out of ten books which appear and which are devoted to the Arab world seem to concern Algeria. Many are written by Algerians and virtually all of them relate events which took place between 1945 and 1980. Others are written by ex-French conscripts or by economists of one political hue or another, intent on proving or disproving Algeria's "socialist experiment". The harvest of recent years has been rich in numbers but very uneven.

There have been few good novels, but Pierre Bourgeade's *Les Serpents* is very much about the Algerian war of independence and a very good novel. It tells the story of a French primary-school teacher who is conscripted and sent, after a few weeks' training near Marseilles, to fight in North Africa. Aibin has always lived with his mother and is totally innocent regarding the real world. He soon finds himself in a situation where he has to torture Algerian "rebels". Having sworn to himself he would never do such a thing, he cannot face up to his shame and commits suicide.

Down the lawless road

Robin Buss

Jean Métellus

La famille Vortex
275pp. Paris: Gallimard. 84 Fr.

"Our novelists are published in Paris – and now they live there too", says a character in Graham Greene's *The Comedians*; the remark summarizes the theme of *La famille Vortex* as well as the fate of its Haitian author. Under the régime that followed the overthrow of President Dumarsais Estimé in 1950 and led, through a series of military governments and constitutional violations, to the terror of "Papa Doc" Duvalier, *président à vie*, the Haitian middle class, including its intellectuals, was reduced by murder, imprisonment and exile and the country deprived of its educated élite.

Though Métellus's view of Haiti is, in one sense, as narrow as Greene's, it emphasizes solidity, normality and continuity as much as uncertainty and change. Set during the final stages of President Estimé's government, the novel starts with a family reunion around the figures of Olga, distant descendant of the first Indian inhabitants of the island, and Solon, patriarch, poet and sailor. Their children, Joseph the progressive priest, Sylvain the doctor and Edgard, the army officer, represent almost too neatly the élite of the Haitian bourgeoisie, but remain credible as

Conversions

The push-button lights in the stairwell extinguish after thirty seconds. The undivided *Autobahn* doubles as runway. An upland track is asphalted for the biathlon, skating and shooting.

Do we run or stay and fight? The suicide machines on the border, or the black-market rates of five to one?

Michael Hofmann

Bourgeade is a very economical writer; his sentences are as stark as the Algerian landscape. There is a sentimentality about the middle used, whether by the French army or the Algerian guerrillas. The story of independence cost Algeria one million dead and France many tens of thousands of lives both of settlers and French soldiers. Torture was practised on a wide scale, and ordinary Frenchmen conducted themselves in a manner which few would have believed possible. The moral of this novel is simple, that man cannot remain innocent when he makes war, but *Les Serpents* is none the less compelling for telling an old truth.

Azzéline Bounemeur has set his novel in the earlier days of the twentieth century, when the first stirrings of Algerian nationalism were being felt but no one among the settlers could imagine Algeria being anything other than three French "départements". In *Les bandits de l'Atlas*, he tells the story of the peasants, dispossessed of their land by the settlers. Many Algerians at the time fled into the mountains and from such sanctuaries made raids on French and Algerian farms. Bounemeur's central figure is Hassan, whose family is killed by a *Caïd* (a muslim judge) allied to the French. Hassan finds work on a nearby farm but swears to revenge his family's death and, a few years later, joins a group of outlaws. When the group comes face to face with the French *gendarmes*, who are supported by the *Caïd*'s men, Hassan is the only rebel to escape the massacre. A few days later he succeeds in killing the *Caïd*, and becomes a local folk hero.

Bounemeur writes in a simple, classical, very unromantic style well suited to his tragic story.

Down the lawless road

Robin Buss

Jean Métellus

La famille Vortex
275pp. Paris: Gallimard. 84 Fr.

"Our novelists are published in Paris – and now they live there too", says a character in Graham Greene's *The Comedians*; the remark summarizes the theme of *La famille Vortex* as well as the fate of its Haitian author. Under the régime that followed the overthrow of President Dumarsais Estimé in 1950 and led, through a series of military governments and constitutional violations, to the terror of "Papa Doc" Duvalier, *président à vie*, the Haitian middle class, including its intellectuals, was reduced by murder, imprisonment and exile and the country deprived of its educated élite.

Though Métellus's view of Haiti is, in one sense, as narrow as Greene's, it emphasizes solidity, normality and continuity as much as uncertainty and change. Set during the final stages of President Estimé's government, the novel starts with a family reunion around the figures of Olga, distant descendant of the first Indian inhabitants of the island, and Solon, patriarch, poet and sailor. Their children, Joseph the progressive priest, Sylvain the doctor and Edgard, the army officer, represent almost too neatly the élite of the Haitian bourgeoisie, but remain credible as

MARTIN WALSER

The Swan Villa
Translated by Lelia Vennewitz
247pp. Secker and Warburg. £7.95.
0 436 65141 7

It is a pleasure to welcome Lelia Vennewitz's very acceptable translation of Martin Walser's novel *Das Schwanenhäus*, reviewed in the TLS on October 3. The novel, which has taken a number of liberties with Walser's text, but stays in the cause of indicating the atmosphere of the original. It is probably not among other things an arresting novel, a political dimension completely lacks a political dimension – but it is as successful as any in depicting that chaos which is at the centre of his view of life. The role of the German estate agent (rather different from that of his British counterpart) played out here by the self-doubting Gottlieb Zörn, inspires Walter to portray the world of the economic miracle at its most futile and questionable.

Michael Hofmann

New life in a strange town

Nicole Irving

Meira Chand

The Bonsai Tree
229pp. John Murray. £8.50.
0 7155 4007 0

"There was so much she had to come to terms with, how much more had she to face?" This question, coming two-thirds of the way through Meira Chand's *The Bonsai Tree*, cannot reassure the reader who by now has witnessed the novel spill over and exceed the arguably adequate proportions it seemed in the first few chapters to be assuming. For, unlike the poor central character, Kate, whom the question concerns, we know that Kate's personal and domestic troubles, serious though they are, will soon be superseded by something far worse.

Meira Chand is not content to

explore the difficulties which face the young English woman recently married in England to a Japanese man, Jun, her efforts to adapt to life in Japan and the discovery she makes regarding the lot of Japanese women. Chand also attempts a fast-moving story of industrial rivalry, with underworld involvement, ritual gangland violence ("self-amputation of finger joints"), incidental kidnapping of a wife, blackmail, virtual kidnapping of the heroine, her near rape in a chauffeur-driven car ("large and black and late as she runs through strange areas of night-time Osaka, unwittingly giving the slip to two gangsters ready to put her to work in their twilight world, and finally stumbling upon some men so wretched and dirty she takes them for animals. In fact they see her distress and take her to Father Ota, a Christian Japanese. He reveals to Kate the miserable area which makes up his parish: Kamagasaki, the quarter of

exploited day-labourers, dropouts, gangsters, prostitutes and unattachables.

There Kate undergoes a spiritual transformation. She sees the "value of her own condition" and, helped by all she has learned about this hopeless and secret facet of Japan, she finds the strength to forgive her husband for having a mistress – and a son by her. Just as she is about to be reunited with him she is killed while saving a child's sacrifice "centred a more positive interest upon Kamagasaki".

Compared with all this, her earlier trials – the exceptionally difficult and unpleasant mother-in-law, the stillbirth of her own son and the discovery of her husband's "second family" – may seem unexciting, but they give rise to sustained and subtle reflection on the rôle of women in Japan, as well as some evocative description of the "strange, dense, detailed world" which Kate encounters

there. Even so the writing occasionally reminds one of the simplistic contrasts of some unpretentious Japanese television films; for example the gangster who speaks "through twisted lips", or Chieko, Jun's mistress with the "brazen eyes".

It seems fair to say that the focus of Meira Chand's novel is unclear. It had portrayed less exaggerated characters and events; and Kate has more to learn in Japan than a different woman might. Kate clearly has not given much thought to the position of women in her own culture: it is without fondness or understanding that she remembers her mother's wifely own expectations of marriage are confused. Although in the course of her adventures she comes to realize the narrowness of the earlier views, and to understand what it is like to be Chieko, or to be a prostitute, her heroic death lets her off the hook – as it does the author.

Crossing over

Linda Taylor

Sally Emerson

Listeners
178pp. Michael Joseph. £7.95.
0 7161 2134 1

Long shot: Kensington High Street, summer. Focus on: woman (Jennifer), late twenties, red hair, self-absorbed. Cut to: Turkish restaurant – bearded husband, Martin, leaving Jennifer for another woman. Cut to: Jennifer with GP, Jennifer with social worker, Jennifer at dinner party in intense conversation with civil servant (Richard). Jennifer at spiritualist church. Jennifer at the home of Mrs Maugham, the medium. Pan round *Psycho*-like interior of room, filled with stuffed animals, while sinister music plays. Fade out: music. Main dialogue begins.

Another slightly chilling, simple-minded B-movie, this one's about a group of feeble spiritualists, led by the cooey, chocolate eating Mrs Maugham, who encourage nervous young women to commit suicide and, thus, to join the peaceful world of "the other side", the world inhabited by the "listeners" of Walter de la Mare's poem. It is hard to take Sally Emerson's second novel more seriously than that.

Jennifer, a history teacher who writes biographies of famous women for teenagers, is experiencing one of those soul-searching crises of confidence when intelligence and good sense are replaced by a grovelling half-faith in itself as a political force and its inability to distinguish political right from wrong: "On no self-judgment commence it, old friend! Innocence quand le pouvoir est en question." One of the characters remarks, anticipating the lawlessness to come.

Although *Listeners* often seems to contain material more suitable for Mike and Boon than for Michael Joseph, the author has, at least, potential for novelistic analysis. There are the wives (like Jane) who have babies and thereby keep their husbands. There are the wives (like Stella) who want to have babies but whose husbands don't (isn't it, what a mess, therefore, fall in love with a more fertile woman). There are the wives (like Jennifer) who pursue careers and who have their seemingly supportive husbands to less clever, more malleable females. There are the wives (like Sarah, Jennifer's mother) who have their husbands out of boredom and recognize the need for protection and affection. And there are the women depicting their view of life. The role of the German estate agent (rather different from that of his British counterpart) played out here by the self-doubting Gottlieb Zörn, inspires Walter to portray the world of the economic miracle at its most futile and questionable.

Do we run or stay and fight? The suicide machines on the border, or the black-market rates of five to one?

Michael Hofmann

Michael Hofmann

Michael Hofmann

Michael Hofmann

Michael Hofmann

Michael Hofmann

Michael Hofmann

Michael Hofmann

Michael Hofmann

Maugham's parlour like the proverbial moth. A mock Gothic treatment of this material could have been palatable and amusing. But this is a novel where the sun bounces off rooftops, wall telephones cling like leeches and life is a cruise ship to oblivion; Sally Emerson is not exactly strong on subtleties.

Jennifer, meanwhile, explains her problem to Mrs Maugham: "It's so hard to achieve a balance. I want both, you see. I want love and marriage and I want my dreams. That's the problem. I have always wanted everything. I've tried to fill my arms with so much that I've dropped the lot."

And Sheila explains hers to Jennifer: "I can't choose between them, you see, and it's driving me mad. I love them both in different ways and in some of the same ways. It's the conflict that's so terrible. Yes, isn't it? And unresolvable for poor Sheila who, under the guidance of Mrs Maugham's brother, gladly takes the pills and whisky route to eternity. Jennifer, mercifully, pulls through and, by the final page, "She felt suddenly, miraculously happy" when she opened her eyes Richard was beside her. From now on, she thought as she flung her arms round him, I want bright, warm colours. I want no greys any more."

Cut to: Mrs Maugham oozing blood from wrists among stuffed animals. Return to: diminishing long shot of Richard and Jennifer embracing in light of street lamp under velvet, star-spangled sky. Play theme music. Roll credits.

The pre-eminent primate

Neville Shack

Michael Stewart

Monkey-Shines
249pp. Macmillan. £7.95.
0 333 34729 3

Allan Mann, the central character of Michael Stewart's novel, starts off as a candidate for the glittering prizes of Oxford. On the credit side so far are his athletic success, and Linda, a formidable actress girl-friend with a red mini-estate car and a lap-dog. To come, he hopes, a good law degree in his approaching finals and the fruit of his ambitions at the Bar.

The opening chapters prepare us for a muscular morality-tale: good lovers make good runners make good barristers. Allan is nothing but the most determined achiever all the way from Manchester's suburbs. Graft makes good.

Yet Allan's striving has an element of unease about it, which soon tips over into anguish. Linda is the cause. After they have a furious row, Allan starts up his motorbike and roars off into the night; the inevitable occurs, and the story itself changes direction radically.

Back in Ella's old laboratory there have been odd experiments in neurochemistry; they are still being realized through the monkey in Allan's home. But who is manipulating whom, and for what motive? Geoffrey's problems

and morality, and looks at one point dangerously close to cracking up. The good news is that for both family and lover there is a happy ending, a rather bold conclusion but one which is entirely in keeping with the sympathies aroused by the engagingly confused Polly.

Colwin does not indulge her protagonist; Polly's increasing rage that other people have all the rights – in have secrets, to hurt her, to do what they like – is shown with affectionate detachment. The strength of *Family Happiness* lies in its asides, in the comic caricatures of minor figures in Polly's life, and the light, incidental satire that results from their exchanges. The *général* and proudly neurotic friend offers Polly the sardonic sympathy and practical good sense that can only be the result of her years of expensive psychotherapy; the unsmiling, spotless brother, Paul, and his wife plan an aggressively calm birth for their child; the older sister-in-law, hopeless cook and Constanza) when she decides to go into a decline, and is herself a well-organized mother to Pete and Dee-Dee (Claire). It is hardly surprising that after two chapters of such "smooth sailing" she is revealed to be having an affair with a perfect lover. "Linky" is a cheroot-smoking painter who "likes a marginal life", does not threaten her domesticity, loves her unconditionally and calls her by her given name. Nor is it surprising that Polly's long arms made her quite miserable. Polly is not by nature given to questioning anything very much but now has a lot of worrying to do about love, happiness

Where the novel falls short is in its central confrontations: neither Linky nor Henry the husband has enough substance to become more than agreeably perfect. Compared to the sharp picture of Polly's family background, one of envy, demands, guilt and affection, her main conflicts seem an ordered and pleasing blur.

Now Allan is paralysed from the neck down. An operation to restore him is bungled. Adding insult to this terrible injury, fickle Linda goes off to spend the summer on the island of Mustique. And there is worse to follow.

Allan's parents, the ham-fisted Jack and Dorothy, fix him up in a flat with every intricate amenity. He is now totally dependent and almost permanently despairing. But Geoffrey, an Oxford boffin friend who experiments with monkeys, transforms Allan's life by giving him one to help overcome the worst of his disability. From now on the empathy between Allan and Ella, the very watchful primate, dominates the book and virtually disposes of the other characters (quite literally). Michael Stewart takes the opportunity to digress into scientific accounts of neurology, physiology, behaviourism and evolution where they bear on his story, and there is abundant and sometimes educative material on such clinical matters.

Back in Ella's old laboratory there have been odd experiments in neurochemistry; they are still being realized through the monkey in Allan's home. But who is manipulating whom, and for what motive? Geoffrey's problems

and morality, and looks at one point dangerously close to cracking up. The good news is that for both family and lover there is a happy ending, a rather bold conclusion but one which is entirely in keeping with the sympathies aroused by the engagingly confused Polly.

Colwin does not indulge her protagonist; Polly's increasing rage that other people have all the rights – in have secrets, to hurt her, to do what they like – is shown with affectionate detachment. The strength of *Family Happiness* lies in its asides, in the comic caricatures of minor figures in Polly's life, and the light, incidental satire that results from their exchanges. The *général* and proudly neurotic friend offers Polly the sardonic sympathy and practical good sense that can only be the result of her years of expensive psychotherapy; the unsmiling, spotless brother, Paul, and his wife plan an aggressively calm birth for their child; the older sister-in-law, hopeless cook and Constanza) when she decides to go into a decline, and is herself a well-organized mother to Pete and Dee-Dee (Claire). It is hardly surprising that after two chapters of such "smooth sailing" she is revealed to be having an affair with a perfect lover. "Linky" is a cheroot-smoking painter who "likes a marginal life", does not threaten her domesticity, loves her unconditionally and calls her by her given name. Nor is it surprising that Polly's long arms made her quite miserable. Polly is not by nature given to questioning anything very much but now has a lot of worrying to do about love, happiness

and morality, and looks at one point dangerously close to cracking up. The good news is that for both family and lover there is a happy ending, a rather bold conclusion but one which is entirely in keeping with the sympathies aroused by the engagingly confused Polly.

Colwin does not indulge her protagonist; Polly's increasing rage that other people have all the rights – in have secrets, to hurt her, to do what they like – is shown with affectionate detachment.

The strength of *Family Happiness* lies in its asides, in the comic caricatures of minor figures in Polly's life, and the light, incidental satire that results from their exchanges. The *général* and proudly neurotic friend offers Polly the sardonic sympathy and practical good sense that can only be the result of her years of expensive psychotherapy; the unsmiling, spotless brother, Paul, and his wife plan an aggressively calm birth for their child; the older sister-in-law, hopeless cook and Constanza) when she decides to go into a decline, and is herself a well-organized mother to Pete and Dee-Dee (Claire). It is hardly surprising that after two chapters of such "smooth sailing" she is revealed to be having an affair with a perfect lover. "Linky" is a cheroot-smoking painter who "likes a marginal life", does not threaten her domesticity, loves her unconditionally and calls her by her given name. Nor is it surprising that Polly's long arms made her quite miserable. Polly is not by nature given to questioning anything very much but now has a lot of worrying to do about love, happiness

Where the novel falls short is in its central confrontations: neither Linky nor Henry the husband has enough substance to become more than agreeably perfect. Compared to the sharp picture of Polly's family background, one of envy, demands, guilt and affection, her main conflicts seem an ordered and pleasing blur.

Now Allan is paralysed from the neck down. An operation to restore him is bungled. Adding insult to this terrible injury, fickle Linda goes off to spend the summer on the island of Mustique. And there is worse to follow.

Allan's parents, the ham-fisted Jack and Dorothy, fix him up in a flat with every intricate amenity. He is now totally dependent and almost permanently despairing. But Geoffrey, an Oxford boffin friend who experiments with monkeys, transforms Allan's life by giving him one to help overcome the worst of his disability. From now on the empathy between Allan and Ella, the very watchful primate, dominates the book and virtually disposes of the other characters (quite literally). Michael Stewart takes the opportunity to digress into scientific accounts of neurology, physiology, behaviourism and evolution where they bear on his story, and there is abundant and sometimes educative material on such clinical matters.

Back in Ella's old laboratory there have been odd experiments in neurochemistry; they are still being realized through the monkey in Allan's home. But who is manipulating whom, and for what motive? Geoffrey's problems

and morality, and looks at one point dangerously close to cracking up. The good news is that for both family and lover there is a happy ending, a rather bold conclusion but one which is entirely in keeping with the sympathies aroused by the engagingly confused Polly.

Colwin does not indulge her protagonist; Polly's increasing rage that other people have all the rights – in have secrets, to hurt her, to do what they like – is shown with affectionate detachment. The strength of *Family Happiness* lies in its asides, in the comic caricatures of minor figures in Polly's life, and the light, incidental satire that results from their exchanges. The *général* and proudly neurotic friend offers Polly the sardonic sympathy and practical good sense that can only be the result of her years of expensive psychotherapy; the unsmiling, spotless brother, Paul, and his wife plan an aggressively calm birth for their child; the older sister-in-law, hopeless cook and Constanza) when she decides to go into a decline, and is herself a well-organized mother to Pete and Dee-Dee (Claire). It is hardly surprising that after two chapters of such "smooth sailing" she is revealed to be having an affair with a perfect lover. "Linky" is a cheroot-smoking painter who "likes a marginal life", does not threaten her domesticity, loves her unconditionally and calls her by her given name. Nor is it surprising that Polly's long arms made her quite miserable. Polly is not by nature given to questioning anything very much but now has a lot of worrying to do about love, happiness

Fatalities

Christopher Hawtree

COLIN DOUGLAS

A Cure For Living
195pp. Hutchinson. £7.50.
0 09 151320 0

Disgust with the human body, a necessary qualification for an effective satirist, does not form part of the Hippocratic Oath. Medical practice, dealing with mankind at its most absurd and vulnerable, could make an apt basis for coruscating comment on human vanity and folly; all too often, however, in novels about it charity comes to the surface and the effect is deadened. Colin Douglas's novels about Dr David Campbell, of which *A Cure For Living* is the fifth, contain a steady succession of horribly mutilated bodies whose state is paralleled by the drunken inability of their doctors to sustain satisfactory sexual performances. Douglas does not flinch from describing the specimens on the slab, and he has a genially coarse line in imagery, such as the girl in bed who "seized her prize like a relay sprinter snatching the baton".

The satire is not sustained either: the novels slough off into scenes whose pointlessness is made all the more leaden by attempted humour. The last writer likens *A Cure For Living* to *The Loved One*, an extravagant comparison which, although it serves to show Douglas's interest in transatlantic language, emphasizes the headlong nature of this novel beside the precision of Waugh's.

Dr Campbell has now become a visiting Fellow at an American university and, bewildered by the conflicting political systems of Medicare and various Foundation schemes, joins a department devoted to making sense of death. For the living, not chained to oxygen-machines and their eyes not fixed on "the customary ceiling-mounted television", it is largely a matter of "the solemn casualness of a American marital behaviour". This "proceeds" – the character, meanwhile gabbling away about "Life Ending situations and symptomatology and quantitation" – with digressions that fail to make anything fresh from familiar subjects such as vegetarian restaurants and protest groups. Some of the doctors themselves are involved in predictably ironic deaths. Colin Douglas does create occasional pleasing effects: at one of the funerals a female chaplain gives a sermon taking as its theme "we are all loggers on the great highway of life..." and Campbell later listens to a morose, witless commentator announcing a Beethoven quartet in "a new recording by a foreign group... from, uh, Amadeus. Take it away, boys..."

Such felicities have to be disinterred from a story which does not always avoid the muddled language and thought it sets out to satirize. Dr Optimian, in Peacock's *Gryll Grylls*, treated this subject 120 years ago with concise elegance when he remarked, "I have no wish to expedite communication with the Americans. If we could apply the power of electrical repulsion to preserve us from ever hearing anything more of them, I should think that we had for once derived a benefit from science." Dr Campbell, meanwhile, tolerates the race over many pages, falling asleep after a fine, gory shoot-out. Presumably he will wake to practise in another novel.

Doubts on Darwin

John Durant

GORDON RATTRAY TAYLOR

The Great Evolution Mystery
277pp. Secker and Warburg. £8.95.
0 436 51333 0

After more than a century, the Darwinian theory of evolution remains one of a very select company of scientific theories about which almost everyone with aspirations to intellectual accomplishment thinks it proper to have an opinion. In part, no doubt, this is due to its relative accessibility (the theory can still be stated reasonably clearly without resort to mathematics, although there are many traps for the unwary); and in part, also, to its generality (the theory has so many interesting applications that it inevitably attracts a great deal of attention); but above all, it is due to the fact that it almost shimmers with metaphysical promise. Ever since it was launched upon the world, in 1859, the theory of evolution by natural selection has been recognized as of the first importance for anyone engaged in that most Victorian of enterprises, the construction of a "scientific world-view".

For all these reasons (doubtless there are others), Darwinism has always inspired a steady stream of books and articles written, not by evolutionary biologists, but by interested observers of the biological scene. One such work is the subject of the present review, *The Great Evolution Mystery* is the late Gordon Rattra Taylor's last book (he died in December 1981, shortly after completing the manuscript). Sadly, therefore, it must be said that it quite fails to do justice to a long and distinguished career in science journalism. That it is badly organized and full of historical and scientific errors might perhaps be forgiven under the circumstances (although I cannot help wondering what advice was given to the author's widow by the biologists whose help is acknowledged in the foreword); but far more serious is the fact that it displays a profound incomprehension of its subject. In brief, Mr Rattra Taylor appears never to have understood properly either Darwin himself or his many successors. In this situation it is hardly surprising that he should have found evolution so utterly "mysterious": the only thing that is odd, particularly in a man so well versed in the findings of modern science, is that he should have mistaken his own mystification for a problem in biology.

This is a harsh indictment, and it requires justification. First, let me deal with the "straightforward errors". Consider the following list, which provides a mere sample of the mistakes contained in Chapter One: (i) the early evolutionist Erasmus Darwin was Charles Darwin's uncle (page 13); (ii) Darwin was advised against publishing an early draft of his book on evolution "by a number of eminent naturalists" (page 21); (iii) "But the fact is, when deer fight seriously they fight with their feet" (page 27); (iv) Darwin claimed that "all changes arose by chance and all changes were selected" (page 33); and (v) "Only in bacteria... do we see anything approaching evolution in the act" (page 34). For those who may not be familiar with the subject, it is worth saying that Erasmus Darwin was Charles Darwin's grandfather; that far from having been advised against publication, Darwin was being actively encouraged to get into print at the time he received Alfred Russel Wallace's paper in 1858; that when deer fight seriously they fight with their antlers; that Darwin never once claimed that chance variation and natural selection were the sole agencies of organic evolution; and that evolution in action has been observed in many groups of plants and animals as well as in bacteria.

Errors such as these (and there are many more) inevitably undermine the credibility of the book, but they are by no means its greatest weakness. This is to be found at the heart of Taylor's argument against orthodox Darwinism as an adequate account of organic evolution and amounts to the claim that, while natural selection may explain the fine tuning of organic

adaptation, it is powerless to resolve a number of fundamental evolutionary "puzzles", of which the chief are: sudden changes in the fossil record; variations in the rate of evolution; evolutionary trends and "convergences"; and complex adaptations. On all these issues, Taylor adopts a tactic widely favoured by Darwin's Victorian critics, as well as by latter-day fundamentalists, i.e. he appeals to intuition. Surely, he argues, mere natural selection (which he tends to equate with blind chance) cannot account for the rapid appearance of new forms, mass extinctions, and so-called "living fossils" (species that show little change from remote geological periods up to the present); and how can we possibly accept that a Darwinian lottery produced steady change in a definite direction (e.g. increase in size of animals), or the convergence of different organisms upon similar adaptations (e.g. the wings of flying vertebrates)? And so on.

The problems with this approach would be great even if Taylor were master of it - after all, intuitive "guessimates" of what natural selection can and cannot do are no substitute for proper scientific analysis - but for the most part the alleged difficulties are entirely of his own making. Take, for example, the question of evolutionary trends, to which the book repeatedly returns. Taylor claims that many animals have become too large for their own good; that, as he puts it, they "overshot" because "the gears had stuck - because some genetic regulator had got switched on and could not be switched off". But this is fanciful nonsense. There is no evidence whatever for such "overshoot", dinosaurs, Irish elk and mammoths notwithstanding, and thus we need hardly trouble ourselves with inventing improbable mechanisms to account for it.

Similarly, Taylor cites the extraordinary sexual adornments of many birds as problems for Darwinism, and this despite the fact that Darwin developed an entire theory (sexual selection) to account for them; that this theory has undergone a great deal of successful elaboration and testing in recent years, and that these adornments now stand as some of the best understood evolutionary phenomena. Taylor writes: "The well-known case of the bower birds looks very much like the kind of 'overshoot' which we noted in the evolution of morphological features"; but this kind of vague intuition serves merely to distract the reader from the realization that bower birds are precisely the kinds of things that Darwinian sexual selection is expected to produce.

This criticism could be greatly extended. Mimicry, commensalism, so-called "altruistic" behaviour and many other rather well characterized biological phenomena are all misrepresented or misunderstood in the interests of discrediting Darwinism. It is no exaggeration to say that this book muddles virtually everything it touches, and one can only hope that its confused meanderings will not confuse too many others.

Turning finally to the book's positive suggestions for improvements in evolutionary theory, we are faced once again with the problem of metaphysical shimmer mentioned earlier. *The Great Evolution Mystery* is a variant on a familiar theme: "There are more things in Heaven and Earth, my dear son, than are dreamed of in your philosophy." Taylor clearly sees Darwinian evolutionism as a cold, soulless, and in his final chapter, entitled "Chance or Purpose?", he offers in its place the view that "life is more complex, even more mysterious, than we have supposed". Calling upon an old tradition of biological interest in the "self-directing properties" of life, he asks us to consider the possibility that organisms control their own evolution, even to the extent of providing themselves with batteries of (temporarily suppressed) genes for use in the remote future. How these genes could be provided other than by psychic or divine foreknowledge he does not explain, but certainly the book evokes the kind of dreamy mysticism characteristic of so many works that speak in the laws of life as a foundation for spiritual aspirations. While we may sympathize with these aspirations, they are no substitute for sound argument and rigorous analysis.

Artistry on the wing

Redmond O'Hanlon

JAMES FISHER (Editor)

Thorburn's Birds
Revised by John Parslow
190pp. Ebury. Paperback, £6.95.
0 7181 2183 X

JOHN SOUTHERN

Thorburn's Landscape: The Major Natural History Paintings
121pp. Elm Tree Books. £12.50.
0 241 10679 6

Archibald Thorburn (1860-1935) is perhaps the greatest of all British painters of birds. The son of Robert Thorburn, miniaturist to Queen Victoria, he received a strict early training in drawing and anatomy from his father and, by the time he was forty, his contemporaries, recognizing the range of his field knowledge, his outstanding skill and his own techniques in the use of tempera and flake-white, his mastery in painting the intricacies of plumage, his fluency with landscapes, and the freedom of his wild birds from any hint of the stiffness of taxidermy, were already placing his achievements above the work of Edward Lear, John Gould and Joseph Wolf.

After successes at the Royal Academy exhibitions, and a few run-of-the-mill commissions (two plates in E. Harting's *Sketches of Bird Life*, 1882, and 144 in W. Swayland's *Familiar Wild Birds*) Thorburn's great opportunity came in January 1887. The illustrator for Lord Lilford's *Coloured Figures of the Birds of the British Islands*, J. G. Keulemans, fell ill, and Thorburn was invited to finish the work. His very first plates (in the issue for September 1888) trebled the subscription list. Most of the 268 paintings he eventually completed remain in print and may still be found in T. A. Coward's *The Birds of the British Isles and their Eggs and some of them in the schoolboy's pocket-book, The Observer's Book of Birds*.

In 1915-16 Thorburn finally produced a book of his own - a remarkable set of paintings which were

a great advance even on his own earlier work (the style more confident, the birds more often active) and accompanied by his own explanatory text. This four-volume *British Birds* was an instant success, eventually selling some 2,550 copies - a single one of which, from the first edition, would now command about £500. But the new paperback *Thorburn's Birds*, beautifully produced, absurdly cheap, is in some ways a better buy.

Thorburn's text was no match for his painting, and in 1967 James Fisher sensibly removed it *in toto* and substituted his own. Rightly believing that Witherby's *Handbook* and Bannerman's *Birds of the British Isles* were more or less definitive accounts of the general habits of our birds, he provided an authoritative account (here up-dated to 1975 by John Parslow) of their distribution and status. The notes are full and precise. The red-backed shrike, for instance, is a

broadly distributed palearctic species breeding in Asia from Asia Minor, Cyprus, the Caucasus, Iraq, central Persia and Afghanistan, the Himalayas, highland west China and east China south of the Yangtze north to the middle and upper Siberian river systems, east to the upper Amur, the Sea of Okhotsk, south Kamchatka and Sakhalin and Japan. In Europe breeds from the hills of north Portugal and Spain, the Pyrenees, south France, Corsica, Sardinia, central Italy and Greece north to England, south-eastern Norway, south Sweden and Finland, Lake Onega, the upper North Dvina and the central Urals.

Matching the list of such exotic residence, the opposite page presents an equally rich Thorburn portrait of the entire shrike family, complete with a solitary bee impaled behind the head on a thorn of the dog-rose. The breeding population in Britain and its varying fortunes over the last fifty years ("record 1933 Midlothian unconfirmed") is discussed, and an estimate of its recent numbers given (about eighty known pairs in 1972).

Birds are ranked throughout on a scale which ranges from 'one' (very scarce) to 'seven' (abundant) - the wryneck, for example, falls into the first class (one to five pairs in 1970-3)

and the rook the last (one-and-a-half million occupied nests in the mid 1940s). A full bibliography, a clear index, a list of species recently added to the British list (including Eleanor's falcon, 1977; the belted kingfisher, 1918-19; and the yellow bellied sapsucker, 1975) and maps of world fauna zones and Britain by vic-counties complete this voluptuously colourful little book.

John Southern, obviously an artist himself, and the owner and curator of the Thorburn Museum at Liskeard in Cornwall, is, in *Thorburn's Landscape*, particularly good on Thorburn's working methods and most at ease when making technical comment on the individual paintings. Thorburn signalled his virtuosity plainly to other bird-painters: he surmounted the tortuous problems of perspective posed by the back of a red grouse looking directly away from the observer (in "The Gathering Storm", 1894); he could paint drops of dew without fuss; laying on and removing wet colour with a cloth, he could roll mist down a valley and exhale stag's breath into the cold air, and most impressively of all, perhaps, using the light thrown up from small patches of heather, he convincingly painted, on white paper, white ptarmigan on snow.

Perhaps Thorburn's most moving paintings in this collection are his fluffy "Woodcock and Chick" (1933), painted amongst a litter of oak leaves, or the same birds sheltering on an East Coast sand dune ("In from the North Sea", 1931), which were both completed whilst Thorburn was suffering horribly from an open wound in his back after a cancer operation in 1930, the disease from which he died five years later.

Thorburn's Landscape contains useful check-lists of the extraordinary range of birds he illustrated - the great Lilford, for instance, is followed by "Little, Alicia Bewick (the Archibald), Our Pet Heron, 1900", colour prints and proofs of Thorburn published from 1900 to 1930; pictures he exhibited at the Royal Academy; and a list of the Christmas cards which he painted and donated to the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

In this world the central myths are those of Narcissus and Cain. If one asks what they have in common, the answer seems to be that for both figures pursuit and flight are accidental opposites, which identify the same condition of homelessness. The story of Narcissus, as Macpherson recounts it, has had three main characters in every version after Ovid: the hero himself, his shadow or reflection, and the second self whose embrace he cannot attain, being always thwarted by the reflection which serves as a "decoy". In the *Metamorphoses* the unknowable third is suggested by the presence of Echo; and Blake repeats the triad with his division of subject into Spectre and Emanation. "I take it," writes Macpherson, "that the true demonic is precisely something of oneself that splits off and becomes recognized as 'the other'; recognition of the 'other' assumes a relation to oneself, so that one sees it as 'obsessing', 'haunting', or 'possessing'." Every adaptation of the Narcissus myth is original in this sense, and his scheme is versatile enough to reveal lineaments of the myth where one might not expect to find it: in *The Scarlet Letter*, for example, with its configuration of Dimmesdale-Chillingworth-Hester. The works that have done most to shape Macpherson's thinking, however, are *Alastor* and *Frankenstein*. Though summarized in a few pages each, they loom behind everything he says about other poems and novels - *Alastor* for a pursuit of nature, that leads to exile from all its creatures, *Frankenstein* for a spectral possession in which the fulfillment of Narcissus and the curse of Cain become indistinguishable.

Between an opening chapter on Goethe's *Tasso* and an epilogue on Canadian literature, Macpherson deals with the invention of the romance hero, in "L'Allegro" and "I Pensive"; the final books of *Paradise Lost*, and the stanzas on the poet in Gray's "Elegy"; with the conventions of Gothic fiction from Walpole and Radcliffe to Charlotte Dacre and Charlotte Smith, which are illustrated with line drawings by Marjorie Blamey and photographs by John Gledhill and Michael Warren.

Chapter Nine, "The Rose Consumed", treats of a number of properties of the flower, real or imagined, that have been made use of by mankind: remedies, receipts, the

potpourri, oil of roses and the like while the last chapter discusses the use in literature, with special reference to its exploitation by poets.

Graham Thomas is our greatest living expert on the rose and its history, and this book is dedicated to him. Wherever his elegant prose is quoted, one cannot but have a sense of its relief, for Paterson's own prose is often heavy going: "As Arabians moved from Persia, which they had conquered by the seventh century AD, the flowers of the Middle East followed them, gathering up others in their train, took to the eighth century, and eastward to India two centuries later." "The plant and person interaction could not have been more fortuitous: 'Just as in the past a species gave rise to just one or two mutants or chance seedlings, so in the twentieth century have some splendid individuals occurred'."

Much that is lively and original in Allen Paterson's occasional journalism is generally missing here: *The History of the Rose* reads more as a labour of love.

JAY MACPHERSON

The Spirit of Solitude: Conventions and Continuities in Late Romanticism
349pp. Yale University Press. £21.
0 300 02632 2

Romance is a Cheshire-Cat word, like causation or fortune, and like them it ceases to make sense out of those who try to restrict its meanings. In the 1940s and 1950s, scholars under the influence of the New Criticism used it to describe an obsolete genre, the precursor of the novel. This was good for morale and for the working methods and most at ease when making technical comment on the individual paintings. Thorburn signalled his virtuosity plainly to other bird-painters: he surmounted the tortuous problems of perspective posed by the back of a red grouse looking directly away from the observer (in "The Gathering Storm", 1894); he could paint drops of dew without fuss; laying on and removing wet colour with a cloth, he could roll mist down a valley and exhale stag's breath into the cold air, and most impressively of all, perhaps, using the light thrown up from small patches of heather, he convincingly painted, on white paper, white ptarmigan on snow.

Perhaps Thorburn's most moving paintings in this collection are his fluffy "Woodcock and Chick" (1933), painted amongst a litter of oak leaves, or the same birds sheltering on an East Coast sand dune ("In from the North Sea", 1931), which were both completed whilst Thorburn was suffering horribly from an open wound in his back after a cancer operation in 1930, the disease from which he died five years later.

Thorburn's Landscape contains useful check-lists of the extraordinary range of birds he illustrated - the great Lilford, for instance, is followed by "Little, Alicia Bewick (the Archibald), Our Pet Heron, 1900", colour prints and proofs of Thorburn published from 1900 to 1930; pictures he exhibited at the Royal Academy; and a list of the Christmas cards which he painted and donated to the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

In this world the central myths are those of Narcissus and Cain. If one asks what they have in common, the answer seems to be that for both figures pursuit and flight are accidental opposites, which identify the same condition of homelessness. The story of Narcissus, as Macpherson recounts it, has had three main characters in every version after Ovid: the hero himself, his shadow or reflection, and the second self whose embrace he cannot attain, being always thwarted by the reflection which serves as a "decoy". In the *Metamorphoses* the unknowable third is suggested by the presence of Echo; and Blake repeats the triad with his division of subject into Spectre and Emanation. "I take it," writes Macpherson, "that the true demonic is precisely something of oneself that splits off and becomes recognized as 'the other'; recognition of the 'other' assumes a relation to oneself, so that one sees it as 'obsessing', 'haunting', or 'possessing'." Every adaptation of the Narcissus myth is original in this sense, and his scheme is versatile enough to reveal lineaments of the myth where one might not expect to find it: in *The Scarlet Letter*, for example, with its configuration of Dimmesdale-Chillingworth-Hester. The works that have done most to shape Macpherson's thinking, however, are *Alastor* and *Frankenstein*. Though summarized in a few pages each, they loom behind everything he says about other poems and novels - *Alastor* for a pursuit of nature, that leads to exile from all its creatures, *Frankenstein* for a spectral possession in which the fulfillment of Narcissus and the curse of Cain become indistinguishable.

Between an opening chapter on Goethe's *Tasso* and an epilogue on Canadian literature, Macpherson deals with the invention of the romance hero, in "L'Allegro" and "I Pensive"; the final books of *Paradise Lost*, and the stanzas on the poet in Gray's "Elegy"; with the conventions of Gothic fiction from Walpole and Radcliffe to Charlotte Dacre and Charlotte Smith, which are illustrated with line drawings by Marjorie Blamey and photographs by John Gledhill and Michael Warren.

Chapter Nine, "The Rose Consumed", treats of a number of properties of the flower, real or imagined, that have been made use of by mankind: remedies, receipts, the

potpourri, oil of roses and the like while the last chapter discusses the use in literature, with special reference to its exploitation by poets.

Graham Thomas is our greatest living expert on the rose and its history, and this book is dedicated to him. Wherever his elegant prose is quoted, one cannot but have a sense of its relief, for Paterson's own prose is often heavy going: "As Arabians moved from Persia, which they had conquered by the seventh century AD, the flowers of the Middle East followed them, gathering up others in their train, took to the eighth century, and eastward to India two centuries later." "The plant and person interaction could not have been more fortuitous: 'Just as in the past a species gave rise to just one or two mutants or chance seedlings, so in the twentieth century have some splendid individuals occurred'."

Much that is lively and original in Allen Paterson's occasional journalism is generally missing here: *The History of the Rose* reads more as a labour of love.

Fleers and pursuers

David Bromwich

DAVID BROMWICH

The Spirit of Solitude: Conventions and Continuities in Late Romanticism
349pp. Yale University Press. £21.
0 300 02632 2

Romance is a Cheshire-Cat word, like causation or fortune, and like them it ceases to make sense out of those who try to restrict its meanings. In the 1940s and 1950s, scholars under the influence of the New Criticism used it to describe an obsolete genre, the precursor of the novel. This was good for morale and for the working methods and most at ease when making technical comment on the individual paintings. Thorburn signalled his virtuosity plainly to other bird-painters: he surmounted the tortuous problems of perspective posed by the back of a red grouse looking directly away from the observer (in "The Gathering Storm", 1894); he could paint drops of dew without fuss; laying on and removing wet colour with a cloth, he could roll mist down a valley and exhale stag's breath into the cold air, and most impressively of all, perhaps, using the light thrown up from small patches of heather, he convincingly painted, on white paper, white ptarmigan on snow.

Perhaps Thorburn's most moving paintings in this collection are his fluffy "Woodcock and Chick" (1933), painted amongst a litter of oak leaves, or the same birds sheltering on an East Coast sand dune ("In from the North Sea", 1931), which were both completed whilst Thorburn was suffering horribly from an open wound in his back after a cancer operation in 1930, the disease from which he died five years later.

Thorburn's Landscape contains useful check-lists of the extraordinary range of birds he illustrated - the great Lilford, for instance, is followed by "Little, Alicia Bewick (the Archibald), Our Pet Heron, 1900", colour prints and proofs of Thorburn published from 1900 to 1930; pictures he exhibited at the Royal Academy; and a list of the Christmas cards which he painted and donated to the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

In this world the central myths are those of Narcissus and Cain. If one asks what they have in common, the answer seems to be that for both figures pursuit and flight are accidental opposites, which identify the same condition of homelessness. The story of Narcissus, as Macpherson recounts it, has had three main characters in every version after Ovid: the hero himself, his shadow or reflection, and the second self whose embrace he cannot attain, being always thwarted by the reflection which serves as a "decoy". In the *Metamorphoses* the unknowable third is suggested by the presence of Echo; and Blake repeats the triad with his division of subject into Spectre and Emanation. "I take it," writes Macpherson, "that the true demonic is precisely something of oneself that splits off and becomes recognized as 'the other'; recognition of the 'other' assumes a relation to oneself, so that one sees it as 'obsessing', 'haunting', or 'possessing'." Every adaptation of the Narcissus myth is original in this sense, and his scheme is versatile enough to reveal lineaments of the myth where one might not expect to find it: in *The Scarlet Letter*, for example, with its configuration of Dimmesdale-Chillingworth-Hester. The works that have done most to shape Macpherson's thinking, however, are *Alastor* and *Frankenstein*. Though summarized in a few pages each, they loom behind everything he says about other poems and novels - *Alastor* for a pursuit of nature, that leads to exile from all its creatures, *Frankenstein* for a spectral possession in which the fulfillment of Narcissus and the curse of Cain become indistinguishable.

Between an opening chapter on Goethe's *Tasso* and an epilogue on Canadian literature, Macpherson deals with the invention of the romance hero, in "L'Allegro" and "I Pensive"; the final books of *Paradise Lost*, and the stanzas on the poet in Gray's "Elegy"; with the conventions of Gothic fiction from Walpole and Radcliffe to Charlotte Dacre and Charlotte Smith, which are illustrated with line drawings by Marjorie Blamey and photographs by John Gledhill and Michael Warren.

Chapter Nine, "The Rose Consumed", treats of a number of properties of the flower, real or imagined, that have been made use of by mankind: remedies, receipts, the

potpourri, oil of roses and the like while the last chapter discusses the use in literature, with special reference to its exploitation by poets.

Graham Thomas is our greatest living expert on the rose and its history, and this book is dedicated to him. Wherever his elegant prose is quoted, one cannot but have a sense of its relief, for Paterson's own prose is often heavy going: "As Arabians moved from Persia, which they had conquered by the seventh century AD, the flowers of the Middle East followed them, gathering up others in their train, took to the eighth century, and eastward to India two centuries later." "The plant and person interaction could not have been more fortuitous: 'Just as in the past a species gave rise to just one or two mutants or chance seedlings, so in the twentieth century have some splendid individuals occurred'."

Much that is lively and original in Allen Paterson's occasional journalism is generally missing here: *The History of the Rose* reads more as a labour of love.

self-justified. Mary Shelley also adds a disturbing element to the plot, in the form of Walton, the shallow first-person narrator who understands little enough of the story he relates to be likely to repeat it in his own life.

The avenger can work with a small supporting cast of one or two characters. The alchemist who the contrary usually needs a crowd for his best effects. He may be seen as extending the role of Cain in the same way that Pygmalion extends the role of Narcissus, and he employs as his agents a type that Macpherson names the animal man or the animal woman. What Swengali does to Tribby gives an idea of the power in question. But Macpherson concedes that Du Maurier's plot is too sentimental to explore the lower reaches of the alchemist's control. The animal man is "an inheritance, partly from the poetic speech of Caliban, with its monosyllabic moonstruck directness, and partly from the sense of glory lost with which Milton invests his savages in the context of Adam's fall". An instance as grimly effective as any in fiction is the hero of the film *Nightmare Alley*, who leaves the carnival for the big city, meets a lady analyst by whom every secret of his life comes to be known, and in despair returns to the carnival as a geek. His story is not cited in the book, but the appropriate passages on Holmes's Moriarty are, and the only important alchemist it fails to mention is Mabuse. These lacunae would hardly be worth mentioning were Macpherson not otherwise exceptionally well informed about the cinema. Her chronicle of the repositioning of the monster's chamber, from a fiery attic in the 1931 *Frankenstein* to a watery cellar in the sequels, is a virtuoso touch beyond the competence of most scholars, and it ends with this flourish:

The house reappears in the (otherwise dismal) last of the Universal series, *Abbott and Costello Meet Frankenstein*, 1948, with a scene which returns to the carnival as a geek. His story is not cited in the book, but the appropriate passages on Holmes's Moriarty are, and the only important alchemist it fails to mention is Mabuse. These lacunae would hardly be worth mentioning were Macpherson not otherwise exceptionally well informed about the cinema. Her chronicle of the repositioning of the monster's chamber, from a fiery attic in the 1931 *Frankenstein* to a watery cellar in the sequels, is a virtuoso touch beyond the competence of most scholars, and it ends with this flourish:

The house reappears in the (otherwise dismal) last of the Universal series, *Abbott and Costello Meet Frankenstein*, 1948, with a scene which returns to the carnival as a geek. His story is not cited in the book, but the appropriate passages on Holmes's Moriarty are, and the only important alchemist it fails to mention is Mabuse. These lacunae would hardly be worth mentioning were Macpherson not otherwise exceptionally well informed about the cinema. Her chronicle of the repositioning of the monster's chamber, from a fiery attic in the 1931 *Frankenstein* to a watery cellar in the sequels, is a virtuoso touch beyond the competence of most scholars, and it ends with this flourish:

But a passage like this may give a false impression of the style of the book. Its typical device is the survey paragraph, examining several works of diverse kinds as if from the same height, with the whole sometimes clinched by a rapid juxtaposition: as when in a group portrait of assorted European sirens and water-maidens, among them "the Whore of Babylon, slitting her watery eyes one comes at last to 'the woman of Samaria at the well: in the Middle Ages her five husbands and the sixth who is not her husband are interpreted as the five senses; and the devil; and Blake in the finest in the book. The relationship between criminal and victim, pursuer and pursued, is again shown to be more dialectical than the bare shape of the myth would suggest. "For the man whose vision of the world is dominated by guilt, it makes no great difference whether the guilt is his own or someone else's: criminal and avenger when they turn their heads show the same hunted look." In any interesting version of Cain, the author is apt to gravitate to an ironic treatment, by portraying Cain (very much) as Abel and Abel (somewhat) as Cain. One can see this happening most clearly in the effects Godwin builds up by shifting sympathy from Mr Falkland to Caleb Williams and back, above all in the recognition scene at the very end, where the criminal hero confronts his virtuous persecutor. Caleb, as Macpherson points out, is even ambiguously named, and the same sort of ambiguity interested Godwin's daughter when she came to write *Frankenstein*. The longer-lasting popularity of her book owes something to its play with two further myths as potent as that of Cain: her hero is a Prometheus who creates a Satan; the creator is self-righteous and the monster

His, if any, camera ever, had a Gorgon eye. The long stuttings and the elaborate costumes are not enough to account for the crystalline nearness of the figures he records or creates; each is a sylph or spirit-child, as if only here their artist was free to create a thing that could not feel the touch of earthly years. The besilks triumph of art hinted at in the Alice poems.

In a book that has illustrations, all well chosen but some without immediate relevance to the text, it would have been worth showing one of the photographs.

The reservations one feels about certain of Macpherson's judgments come from two features of his method: its sometimes unemphatic thoroughness and its concern with what Fry calls "displacement", or the incorporation of myth in a story whose conduct and fable are apparently realistic. Macpherson's strings of titles and characters have a way of annoying into a semblance of conviction, with twelve references, what might have been captured as an intuition with two or three. Besides the twelfth may turn out to be someone like Rosamond Vincy of *Middlemarch*, whom Eliot portrays "with a swan neck and the mermaid's long fair hair" (though these are not Eliot's words). It is a matter of what one allows to qualify as a decisive clue. To Macpherson the "sinking star" of "Ulysses" is a displaced version of the "maiden elusive or insubstantial" who cannot be embraced. But if one has been reading Tennyson with other Victorian authors it feels like more than that; and at the same time it does less than "remind us that the fleeing nymph of the nineteenth century, to some extent takes over from the elusive lights so well established - if we can put it that way - in the eighteenth". Again, part of the interest of Lamia ought to be that her house is not an "equivalent" of a false paradise such as the Bower of Bliss, any more than she herself is a Spenserian enchantress. At a certain point displacement begins to feel like difference.

Differences of this sort are one reason Macpherson can do nothing with some stories, usually novels, which intersect with her topics and which she doubtless read and pondered. *The Bostonians*, for example, has an alchemist at the fringes of the plot, old Tarrant the mesmerist, and something of an animal woman for his heroine, his daughter Verena. The relationship between them that of doctor to subject, scientist to passive vessel - is very much a piece of romance, as is the easy transition Verena effects from her father to Olive Chancellor and finally to Basil Ransom. Yet Tarrant is pretty well discarded in the middle of the story, and all the links with a traditional romance pattern do not make a key to the relationships of power that dominate the action. It is less important that James had read both Shelleys and was working with their materials that that "Basil Ransom had read Comte, he had read everyone". The myths of romance may be so integrated with the representation of personal motives that a criticism which employs the myths as a code has to stop short: this becomes the more apparent in authors who have been moved to write by a sense of the pathos of society rather than solitude. Because Macpherson often does stop short, it is curious to find her remarks on "Beyond *Great Havisham* there gradually opens the prospect of a useless and archaic genteel class, unable to fend off decay, and parasitic on the real world done in society." Beyond Miss Havisham's house, too, lies Pip's quest for respectability, and with it as much of the life of the story as does not lurk in the name Abel Magwitch. Still, if *The Spirit of Solitude* prefers to address such books obliquely, its style suggests the education in humanity they can bring. The depth of the quotations alone would suffice to make it an unchallengeable source for students of eighteenth and nineteenth-century literature. But it has a depth of concern as well. The notes are delightful, very complete, and almost as important as the text; the lines quoted from Goethe's *Tasso* are Dr Macpherson's own translation, and they read more naturally than any version of Goethe now available in English.

Twentieth-century English Literature (304pp. Macmillan. £12, paperback £3.95. 0 333 27020 7) by Henry Blamires has appeared in the Macmillan History of Literature series under the general editorship of A. Norman Jeffares. The book, which includes eighteen photographic plates, ends with a survey of the state of the novel, the theatre and poetry in the last twenty years.

Twentieth-century English Literature (304pp. Macmillan. £12, paperback £3.95. 0 333 27020 7) by Henry Blamires has appeared in the Macmillan History of Literature series under the general editorship of A. Norman Jeffares. The book, which includes eighteen photographic plates, ends with a survey of the state of the novel, the theatre and poetry in the last twenty years.

Twentieth-century English Literature (304pp. Macmillan. £12, paperback £3.95. 0 333 27020 7) by Henry Blamires has appeared in the Macmillan History of Literature series under the general editorship of A. Norman Jeffares. The book, which includes eighteen photographic plates, ends with a survey of the state of the novel, the theatre and poetry in the last twenty years.

Twentieth-century English Literature (304pp. Macmillan. £12, paperback £3.95. 0 333 27020 7) by Henry Blamires has appeared in the Macmillan History of Literature series under the general editorship of A. Norman Jeffares. The book, which includes eighteen photographic plates, ends with a survey of the state of the novel, the theatre and poetry in the last twenty years.

Twentieth-century English Literature (304pp. Macmillan. £12, paperback £3.95. 0 333 27020 7) by Henry Blamires has appeared in the Macmillan History of Literature series under the general editorship of A. Norman Jeffares. The book, which includes eighteen photographic plates, ends with a survey of the state of the novel, the theatre and poetry in the last twenty years.

Twentieth-century English Literature (304pp. Macmillan. £12, paperback £3.95. 0 333 27020 7) by Henry Blamires has appeared in the Macmillan History of Literature series under the general editorship of A. Norman Jeffares. The book, which includes eighteen photographic plates, ends with a survey of the state of the novel, the theatre and poetry in the last twenty years.

Twentieth-century English Literature (304pp. Macmillan. £12, paperback £3.95. 0 333 27020 7) by Henry Blamires has appeared in the Macmillan History of Literature series under the general editorship of A. Norman Jeffares. The book, which includes eighteen photographic plates, ends with a survey of the state of the novel, the theatre and poetry in the last twenty years.

Twentieth-century English Literature (304pp. Macmillan. £12, paperback £3.95. 0 333 27020 7) by Henry Blamires has appeared in the Macmillan History of Literature series under the general editorship of A. Norman Jeffares. The book, which includes eighteen photographic plates, ends with a survey of the state of the novel, the theatre and poetry in the last twenty years.

Twentieth-century English Literature (304pp. Macmillan. £12, paperback £3.95. 0 333 27020 7) by Henry Blamires has appeared in the Macmillan History of Literature series under the general editorship of A. Norman Jeffares. The book, which includes eighteen photographic plates, ends with a survey of the state of the novel, the theatre and poetry in the last twenty years.

Twentieth-century English Literature (3

Reassembling the pieces

Ian Donaldson

MAYNARD MACK and GEORGE DEFOREST LORD (Editors)

Poetic Traditions of the English Renaissance

319pp. Yale University Press. £14. 0 300 02785 0

Ego in exilio gentis, in exilio nationis: "I was conceived in exile and born in exile", wrote Petrarch in 1350. That sense of exile, A. Bartlett Giamatti suggests in the opening essay of this volume, finds powerful expression in the writings not only of Petrarch but of other early Renaissance humanists. What they felt exiled from were the great achievements of the classical past, which in these latter days were to be recovered only with difficulty and effort. Yet the belief that such things could be recovered at all, reborn in another time and place, tempered that gloomy sense of exile, creating a paradoxical sense of optimism that is central to the mood, and very concept, of the Renaissance. Giamatti observes the early Renaissance interest in the notions of recovery and return, and in the story of Hippolytus, who according to legend was torn apart by terrified horses on the sea-shore of Corinth, but later restored to life by Aesculapius and re-named Virbius, "twice a man". Like the dismembered corpse of Hippolytus, the dismembered corpus of classical learning (the Italian humanists believed) might one day, with great pains and great fortune, be pieced together into a perfect whole, restored by the Aesculapian art of humane scholarship to twice its former virtue.

Giamatti's essay stands appropriately at the head of this collection of essays in honour of

Professor Louiz Martz, for whom the notions of exile and return, loss and rediscovery, have long been of absorbing interest. Martz's *Poet of Exile* (1960, drawing upon earlier studies) explored the sense of exile, personal and political, which Milton must have felt in the latter part of his life, and to which he gave veiled expression in *Paradise Lost*. In *The Paradise Within* (1964), Martz had been much taken by a passage in Trakhe's *Centuries* which expressed an ambition like that which Giamatti finds in the Italian humanists:

to see how things stood in Paradise before they were Muddled and Blended and Confounded, for now they are lost and buried in Ruins. Nothing appearing but fragments, that are worthless shreds and parcels of the. To see the Intire Piece ravisheth the Angels. It was his Desire to recover them and to exhibit them again to the Eyes of Men.

Unlike the humanist wish to reassemble the mangled body of classical learning, however, the Christian wish to understand "how things stood in Paradise" to recover "the Intire Piece" was not to be achieved in this life. There was thus a constant tension contained within the notion of Christian humanism, as Balachandra Rajan suggests in a thoughtful essay on "Milton, Humanism, and the Concept of Piety" in the present volume. Was truth slowly to be recovered through the patient exercise of human reason, or only to be revealed to fallible humanity by an ultimate (and instantaneous) act of divine illumination? Milton's famous passage in *Areopagitica* comparing the human search for truth with the search of Isis to collect the severed limbs of Osiris attempts to accommodate both possibilities. The search would be ended only when Christ at his second coming "shall

bring together every joint and member, and shall mould them into an immortal feature of loveliness and perfection". Yet as Rajan suggests, the passage also stresses the importance of a "collective enterprise", a "nationalization of piety", a strenuous involvement in the business of life rather than a spiritualized withdrawal from it. Milton shares above all the Renaissance confidence that what is now scattered and hidden will one day be gathered, restored, and revealed: that truth will be reborn.

Alastair Fowler writes well about the formal arrangement (and local felicities) of Jonson's *The Forest and the silva* tradition he inherits, skilfully suggesting how the individual poetic trees come together into a wood. After Jonson's death, it may be recalled, his friends in turn assembled a collection of poems in his memory, significantly entitling the volume *Jonsonius Viribus*. What was apparently dispersed and lost through the death of Jonson was restored and renewed (so the title asserted) by this act of homage: Jonson lived on in the memory of his friends, "twice a man". Tributary volumes, however, whether offered to the living or to the dead - are not always easily unified. Like *Jonsonius Viribus* and like most academic Festschriften, *Poetic Traditions of the English Renaissance* seems more like a collection of fine fragments than an organized and coherent whole. The fragments are often distinguished and always worth having, but the book suffers from the jumps and discontinuities that are seemingly endemic to its species.

Several of the essays explore topics and problems that have been examined at one time or another by Martz himself. Helen Gardner's essay on the likely date and context of Donne's "A Nocturnal upon St Lucy's Day" takes its cue from Martz's own writings on the poem. Reviewing the textual and

biographical evidence, Dame Helen thinks it highly unlikely that the "Nocturnal" (or "Twickenham Garden", for that matter) reflects Donne's feelings about Lucy, Countess of Bedford, and agrees with Martz's conjecture that the "Nocturnal" was more probably occasioned by the death of Anne Donne in 1617. George K. Hunter, paying passing tribute to Martz's writings on Christian tragedy, is exercised by a problem that also concerns George deForest Lord in his essay on folklore and myth in *Paradise Regained*: how the idea of Christian heroism - of passive, self-denying, unflamboyant virtue - can be made dramatically interesting. Examining the role of tyrants and martyrs in Elizabethan tragedy, Hunter draws a suggestive parallel from the visual arts, noting the effect of contrast in Bosch's "The Carrying of the Cross" between the inert, expressionless face of Christ and the frenzied animation of the faces that surround him. "The strength of the victim", he writes, "is measured by the energy of the victimizers, the hidden radiance of the protagonist made visible only in the mirror of antagonism, the negative known only by the positives it releases."

In an exercise in "anti-hermeneutics", Thomas M. Greene defends, against the recent attacks of Stephen Booth, a well-known essay by Robert Graves and Laura Riding on Shakespeare's Sonnet 129 which argues for the superiority of the original spelling and punctuation - with all their difficulties, openness, and ambiguities - over the reductive singularity of most modernized texts. Greene opposes what he sees to be the softening, simplifying, familiarizing effect of modern spelling and punctuation, arguing for the necessity of confronting instead the puzzles and oddities of an original text. "We need to measure without blinking", he writes, "the pathos of estrangement,

the ruptures of history, the blockages of tradition." The sentence itself is not easily read without blinking. The "we" to whom Greene monolithically refers are in fact a very mixed lot, with varying skills, experience, stamina, and needs. Arguments about the relative merits of old-spelling and modern-spelling editions too often lose sight of the fact that both kinds of edition have their value. Ruptures and blockages can certainly teach us a lesson, but the editor's task is also necessarily at times to elucidate; and the interpretative decisions which the editor of a modern-spelling text is forced to take can be as illuminating as the advanced scholar as for a reader confronting a poem for the first time.

Other contributors tackle other themes. Harry Berger, Jr writes on youth and age in Spenser's *Shepherd's Calendar*, Judith H. Anderson on the view of George Elizabeth implied in *The Faerie Queene*, E. Talbot Donaldson on Chaucer's Criseyde and Shakespeare's Cressida, Alvin B. Kernan on Hamlet's "Mouse-trap", seen in the light of the relationship between professional players and the court in Shakespeare's day. Lowry Nelson, in his late twenties and does not claim to have known Stevens well, but his portrait he paints of him, judiciously illustrated with quotations from the *Collected Letters*, gives distinctive, human substance to the sensibility one encounters in Stevens's poetry. This is not a case of marginal "human interest": Weiss uses his memories of the man and his environments - his office, his home town, his native landscape - to open up unforeseen perspectives on the poems. The essay succeeds partly because Weiss is an engaging memorialist whose criticism is at its best when he is least bothered by the theory of argument, and partly because he himself, as a poet, is so committed to Stevens's sense of reality - which is to say, to Stevens's sense of how the imagination engages with "things as they are". That this is the binding theme of the book can be evidenced by quotation from the piece with which he chooses to end it, a lecture on Lucretius dating from 1973:

Out of his identification with nature, [Lucretius] believes the same impulse works in and through him as in and through the atoms (is he not made of them?). Like the atoms, these letters and their words (i.e. the poem's) lying side by side, combining, engender the world with all its wonders.

This is to say, in effect, that for Lucretius, as for Stevens, we enter reality by way of the imagination.

POETRY

Taking possession of the prosaic

Clive Wilmer

THEODORE WEISS

The Man from Porlock: Engagements, 1944-1981. 320pp. Guildford: Princeton University Press. £26 (paperback, £7.45).

0 691 01396 9

Recoveries: A Poem

62pp. New York: Macmillan. \$11.95 (paperback, \$6.95).

0 02 625810 2

By far the best thing in *The Man from Porlock*, Theodore Weiss's essays of four decades, is a critical memoir of Wallace Stevens. This is not inappropriate, for Stevens is the presiding genius of Weiss's work and his spirit gives some consistency to this book of occasional writings, most of which are concerned with modern poetry. As founder-editor of the *Quarterly Review of Literature*, Weiss met and began corresponding with Stevens in the mid-1940s. He was then in his late twenties and does not claim to have known Stevens well, but his portrait he paints of him, judiciously illustrated with quotations from the *Collected Letters*, gives distinctive, human substance to the sensibility one encounters in Stevens's poetry. This is not a case of marginal "human interest": Weiss uses his memories of the man and his environments - his office, his home town, his native landscape - to open up unforeseen perspectives on the poems. The essay succeeds partly because Weiss is an engaging memorialist whose criticism is at its best when he is least bothered by the theory of argument, and partly because he himself, as a poet, is so committed to Stevens's sense of reality - which is to say, to Stevens's sense of how the imagination engages with "things as they are". That this is the binding theme of the book can be evidenced by quotation from the piece with which he chooses to end it, a lecture on Lucretius dating from 1973:

Out of his identification with nature, [Lucretius] believes the same impulse works in and through him as in and through the atoms (is he not made of them?). Like the atoms, these letters and their words (i.e. the poem's) lying side by side, combining, engender the world with all its wonders.

This is to say, in effect, that for Lucretius, as for Stevens, we enter reality by way of the imagination.

Rub of the green

Carol Rumens

ANNE STEVENSON

Memoir by Glass Minute. 60pp. Oxford: University Press. £4.50.

0 19 211547 8

Like predecessor, *Enough of Green*, *Memoir by Glass Minute* draws a fair amount of its inspiration from geographical location. The new volume in fact marks a return to green: the landscape is no longer primarily coastal, but dominated by the mountains and pastures of South Wales. Many of the poems are conversely more lyrical and expansive, less immediate than the early *Edgery* in the earlier volume. From where, a formal framework is used, the ideas flow freely across it: "Swifts", an eloquent fable with psalmic rhythms and cadences:

So the Raven took their legs and bound them like their bodies. They hung their wings like boomerangs, they honed their legs like knives. They diminished their feathers and stripped them of velvet. They took their feet and wings. They were emotional, rhapsodic in their weaknesses in their strengths. The plant's

But what kind of world is a modern imagination like Stevens's likely to engender? Weiss attempts to answer this question in the introductory chapter, which gives the book its title. The man from Porlock is seen as an intruder from the practical world of prose whose appearance spells the end of a visionary poem. So Coleridge's prose headline justifying the publication of his fragment is part of the poem, as integral to "Kubla Khan" as Pound's prose quotations are to the *Cantos*. The greatness of Stevens and Pound and the other modern masters, according to Weiss, lies in their willingness to apply their imaginations to the "prose-minded" modern world to take imaginative possession of the quotidian. Though one can't exactly disagree with this, it does beg a lot of questions. Why, for example, has the modern world failed to return the compliment: why does it continue to regard poetry - the work of these poets rather than most - as removed from its concerns? How did a group of deliberate and conscious elitists - Eliot, Yeats and Pound - become the vanguard of literary democracy? And isn't Weiss's description of the practical world as "prose-minded" itself an admission of defeat, seeming to derive from the assumption that some subjects are proper to prose, others to poetry?

Weiss's insistence on the supremacy of the great modernists in this struggle with the quotidian becomes rather a tiresome refrain. Any attempt to draw upon traditions that pay little or no obedience to that achievement is much to primitivist Americans who take Whitman as their model as to insular Englishmen who set great store by Hardy. Three of the essays address themselves to British poetry and Hardy's influence on it and, though the argument has become rather too familiar, it is interesting to hear an American contribution. Not surprisingly Weiss takes Philip Larkin as representative of the anti-modernist, anti-American, pro-Hardy tendency. He quotes extensively from an essay by English readers will have seen, Larkin's introduction to the American edition of Bejerman's *Collected Poems*. Larkin seems to have taken this transatlantic exposure as an opportunity to play the xenophobic game with a vengeance. Bejerman is "the true heir of Thomas Hardy" and "the strong connection between poetry and the reading public that had been forged by Kipling, Housman, Brooke and Omar Khayyam was destroyed as a result" of the Poundian revolution. As

Weiss remarks, "Does Larkin really want us to take this line seriously? What is particularly depressing about it - more even than its dreary narrow-mindedness - is the hopelessly diminished version it conveys of the tradition it ostensibly respects, can Larkin find no poet of major ambition to celebrate? Or any poet at all before the mid-nineteenth century?"

Though it is good to see Weiss treating this apology for criticism with contempt, he is not entirely guileless himself. There is a hint of high republican virtue in his tone that is not worked for and might be seen as the American equivalent of Larkin's insularity. One can also reasonably wish that, in addressing an American audience, he had made more of Larkin's distinction as a poet. In taking issue with Donald Davie he does make some allowances, but then proceeds to travesty what Davie has actually said. The issue is once again Larkin's estimation of Hardy:

Larkin . . . is, by Davie's own admission, a shrunken poet, one who has faithfully followed Hardy's diminishings to their much greater point today. But Davie, recognizing those diminishings, approves them; in a shrunken, threatened world they are all that is possible. Anything else is a lie, irresponsible and utterly dangerous. Badly off as England and America are, one must not shake the boat with extreme criticisms or extravagant imaginings.

It's hard to know where to begin. Leaving aside the awfulness of the prose, it is absurd to represent Davie (of all people) as a timid little Englishman. And then, though Davie estimates Hardy very highly, he nowhere does so at the expense of the modern movement. The case is altogether more complex. He sees Hardy and Yeats as opposite poles of modern English poetry - the one cautious, empirical, ironic (though hardly devoid of passion), the other rhetorical, gestural, Promethean - but it's clear that he values both of them. Moreover, he has insisted - to my mind, too dogmatically - that good poetry cannot be written in England today without regard to the Poundian precedent. To be sure, his view of Yeats, Pound and Eliot has shifted over the years, so much so that he is willing to acknowledge a measure of self-contradiction. The point is that such self-contradiction may be inevitable, given the issues at stake. Those who care passionately about poetry, as Davie does, cannot rest

content with a poetry of restricted horizons. At the same time, we must look at the cost of modernist ambition, and this is what Weiss signally fails to do. One has to consider, for instance, the political stance Pound's version of history impelled him towards and the effect of his choices on the present status of poetry and the poet in the English-speaking world. And, fascism aside, how much of Pound's interpretation of world culture is it possible for any individual to swallow? If it isn't possible to accept the *Cantos* as a whole, isn't that enterprise sorely weakened and damaged? To raise these questions is not to disparage Pound's achievement or even to rate Hardy above him.

The Man from Porlock is a disappointing book. It is depressing to find a poet as good as Weiss claiming responsibility for so much tedious argument, most of it written in such galumphing prose. The urge to defend poets who no longer need defending - they are now the pillars of modernist orthodoxy - leads him into a series of interminable slanging matches: "Did critic X really say what critic Y says he said about poet Z?" Yet the book is not without its merits. Much of the best writing occurs in a group of essays concerned with foreign writers: Leopardi, Kafka and Lucretius. These three and a poorish essay on King Lear broach a theme that preoccupies Stevens, the theme of chaos. Weiss does not use the word as the antonym of order; he takes it to stand for undifferentiated being, unsubdued by

form or reason. He sees the contemplation of chaos as the main function of art - and therefore sees art as fundamentally a religious activity. (At one point he even risks the notion of art as "a surrogate religion" but fortunately doesn't get very far with it.)

This conception of art is at the heart of Weiss's beautiful poem *Recoveries*. It is a sequence of fragmentary monologues spoken by a figure in an early Italian fresco which has held the poet mesmerized. The whole thing is an elaborate conceit built on pictorial illusion. Thus the observer is himself observed and the figure's meditations on the passing of time, the changing crass his constancy has witnessed, become a commentary on the enduring effect of art. The effect changes with time and the changing observer, but the effectiveness remains unchanged and undiminished. Thus the observer of the painting, like the reader of the poem, is drawn into the work of art, modifying it until he is part of it - as if he really had been created by the artist. The poem's own effect is achieved through intense contractions of syntax and the seductive continuity of the rhythm. By way of example, here is the figure in the fresco speaking of his need for light:

On such common mercy I depend. Like a blind beggar, his cup glistening in the sun, there only when some money jingles out the value stamped on it. It is a theme that Stevens would have appreciated.

Ad women's lib

Tracey Warr

DIANA SCOTT

Bread and Roses: an anthology of nineteenth- and twentieth-century poetry by women writers. 282pp. Virago. £4.95.

0 86068 235 8

Diana Scott's enjoyable and illuminating book is divided into four parts: 1820-60, 1860-1920, 1920-80, and the most substantial section, "Poetry Coming from the Women's Liberation Movement: 1970-80". (Christina Rossetti's *Goblin Market* and Elizabeth Barrett Browning's "Blanca Among the Nightingales" appear in the 1820-60 section but were not, in fact, published until 1862.) The first three sections are a well-balanced mixture of some of the finest poetry produced by women in this period, and pieces which are of less literary value but of considerable historical and sociological interest. Selections from the work of Emily Brontë, Elizabeth Barrett Browning and Rossetti are presented alongside poems by two of the popular Victorian "poetesses", Felicia Hemans and Eliza Cook. Charlotte Mew's poems contrast with WSPU anthems and the conventional wartime verse of Alice Meynell. The third section includes more recent writers from Stevie Smith to Penelope Shuttle.

Scott's overall aim in the anthology, however, is more modest. The chronological divisions of the first three sections suggest that some degree of historical comprehensiveness is intended, yet Sylvia Plath and Anne Sexton are not included. Scott's claim that the divisions are not only chronological, but that the "primary literary" work of sections one and three contrasts with poems characterized by political commitment in sections two and four is not convincing. As she has to admit, Elizabeth Barrett Browning is hardly an unpolemic writer, and Mew would seem to belong in a "literary" section rather than a "committed" one. Scott's distinction between "Women's Liberation writers" - that is, those who are politically active - and other contemporary women writers is surely an oversimplified way of dealing with the relationship between politics and literature. She suggests that "the nature of inspiration" is a coherent theme in the anthology, but her remarks on the subject are not illuminating: "the poems show a common language of symbol and vision

. . . seas, rivers and springs, gods, goddesses, angels and spirits, sun, trees and moons, stars, dreams and monsters". No conclusions are drawn concerning the inspiration, specifically, of women poets.

Scott's introductions and biographies give a lot of useful background information. She writes lucidly, but tends to drop into banality. Of the fourth section she tells us that these poems are significant because "For women to tell the truth about their lives expansively and realistically is no small revolution." No one would wish to deny this, but realism is not in itself a literary value. A few of the Women's Liberation poets have succeeded in putting everyday female experience into poetry, but Jo Barnes's "Clinic Day" is unfortunately more typical of the way in which these writers tell "the truth":

" . . . she breast fed," I apologized. A withering look of distaste followed by. "Oh I always like to see EXACTLY how much Nigel is taking." Edit inferior mother, with squalling infant.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning was just as critical of her patriarchal society and of the destructive inequality in relations between the sexes as any of the Women's Liberation poets. But she succeeded in "telling the truth" not only because of her radicalism, but because of the quality of her verse:

A worthless woman; mere cold clay As all false things are; but so fair, She takes the breath of men away: Who gaze upon her unaware. I would not play her larcenous tricks To have her looks! She lied and stole. And spat into my love's pure pyx The rank saliva of her soul. And still they wing the nightingales. The Victorian women poets usually side-stepped the restraints of convention by writing in oblique, unrealistic modes. Although Stevie Smith, writing in this century, could be more direct - "Dark was the day for Childre/Rolandine the artist/When she went to work as a secretary-typist" - her characteristic mode, too, is surreal rather than realistic. Anne Stevenson's "In an Asylum", or Anna Adams's "Her Dancing Days", are examples of the effective use of a more realistic mode in this anthology. But most of the Women's Liberation pieces are not so successful. These poems have important things to say, but they are often linguistically and formally uninteresting and undisciplined. Scott's remark, "I choose at the present not to make judgments about what poetry is", is not an adequate defence.

Motions of the modern mind

Miriam Allott

WILLIAM E. BUCKLER

On the Poetry of Matthew Arnold: Essays in critical reconstruction. 206pp. New York: University Press. \$36.

0 8147 1039 5

Since the appearance of William E. Buckler's early study, *Matthew Arnold's Books Towards a Publishing Diary* (1958) - an interim publication of about 300 letters which the author expected to see printed in the definitive edition of the letters "in a decade or two" - work on Arnold's poetry and prose has poured out thick and fast. The edition of the letters, lamentably, has still not appeared, all inquiries as to its progress drawing blank. But we have a complete chronological annotated edition of the prose and poetry, numerous introductory surveys and selections, commentaries on the literary, political and religious writings and a continuous stream of essays about the poetry, many selecting a particular frame for their explorations. We have Arnold the Humanist, the would-be Classicist, the worried Romantic and the poet of Imaginative Reason, who did his most important thinking through symbolic landscapes projecting a highly individual imaginative world. But the Arnold concerning Professor Buckler in his judicious "essays in critical reconstruction" is the "pre-textual" poet who must be rescued from what is now a cluster of more or less benignly interpretive myths: the consequent Parmassian "even at its best" having asserted "a truth about the poetry that is less than the truth that is actually there". The "myths" in question are chiefly that the poetry is largely autobiographical, "the produce of a personal matrix endlessly evolving verse structures out of the incidents of his own life"; that it is primarily a poetry of statement readily comprehended by thematic paraphrase; and that it is essentially derivative in idiom, with Arnold "the protagonist of other people's insights" - Goethe's or

Carlyle's or Senancour's, or those of the Greek philosophers", a "graceful rhetorician" rather than a serious poet deeply concerned with the nature and function of poetry.

Arnoldians may think the list itself a "myth", Caliban being perhaps unwilling to recognize his own face in the mirror. Whatever the limitations of the special case, the fact is that Buckler has identified some of the most damaging enemies of truth in current criticism of Victorian poetry, which seems to compel its readers to do everything with it except engage with what the poetry itself, actually, says. Like Arnold's Goethe, Buckler declares sternly "Thou aliest here, and here!" And indeed the value of his study, as we should expect from so long established a Victorian scholar, lies in its singling out in Arnold's work formal procedures which really do illustrate what he meant when in 1869 he spoke of his work as representing "the main movement of mind of the last quarter of a century". I am thinking especially of the emphasis on Arnold as a "dramatic or personative poet" in the manner of Hardy (the phrase is taken from Hardy's preface to the *Wessex Poems* of 1898), and as such a master of richer poetic resources - tonal irony, various verbal and structural strategies - than is sometimes understood. There has been much debate about Victorian use of the dramatic monologue, and arguments about the "poetry of experience" and the role of the persona have extended to other dramatic structures, including *Maud*, *Dryad*, "The Forsaken Merman" and "Empedocles on Etna"; their variety testifying to the persistent appeal during the period of such exploratory forms. But we need to know more about the connection between these dominant literary kinds and "the dialogue of the mind with itself" which Arnold diagnosed as an expression of the modern spirit in any age, whether Empedocles' or his own.

Buckler does not help us much with this - for instance he fails to expand upon his reason for placing Arnold's dramatic and "mimetic" structures beside Hardy's as closer to "the modern" than those of Tennyson, Browning or Clough. But one can see

why. Like his predecessors, he has to engage with Arnold's worry about romanticism and the modern age, his attempt to focus his worry in the 1853 Preface, and the bearing of this anxiety on his short poetic career and subsequent long, prolific one as a "master of prose and reason". In discussing these issues Buckler shows that he is among the most earnest and measured of Arnold's admirers. But his admiration is that of a "Classicist" who commends Arnold for his victory over the corroding effects of his age's Romantic Modernism, not that of a "Romantic" who grieves over Arnold's suppression of the conflicting feelings which stimulated many of his most authentic poetic gifts. Hence the austere purposiveness of his methodology and unremitting determination to root out ready assumptions about a "real" Marguerite in the "Switzerland" poems, a "real" situation in "Faded Leaves" or "Dover Beach", a focusing of "real" personal themes in "Empedocles on Etna" and "Tristram and Iseult" or any personal psychological significance in the theme of father and son in "Sohrab and Rustum". Hence, too, his silence about Arnold's inconsequential preoccupation with the "buried self" and also, perhaps, his occasional misinterpretation of comments by other Arnoldians whom he assumes to be at odds with the "truth".

Creating a dramatic three-act structure of his own, he groups the poems into those written before 1853 or else taken to be the "outgrowths" of that period ("Dover Beach", "Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse"); the two long poems of 1851-2, "Empedocles on Etna" and "Tristram and Iseult", and those written after 1853, notably "Sohrab and Rustum" and "Balder Dead"; "Rugby Chapel" and "Thyrsis" ("The Scholar Gipsy" is drawn from its pre-1853 position for purposes of comparison with this late companion poem). In Act One, the young Arnold creates vigorous, often consciously historicist, "dramatic" poems in an attempt to objectify the Romanticism to which he is strongly drawn; in Act Two he succumbs unwittingly to its evil influences but undergoes a timely awakening signalled by the 1853 Preface and the withdrawal of "Empedocles on Etna"; and in Act Three he bravely experiments "with redemptive possibilities" suggested by classical models.

Surprisingly, the Arnold emerging from this testing pilgrimage is not, after all, so different from the Arnold we knew before. The framework, schematic though it is, suits Buckler's skill, enabling him to demonstrate forcefully Arnold's early commitment to the business of being a poet and a reformer of poetry, with a sanguine sense that poetry could become a *magister vitae* for a troubled age. (George Eliot is close to him in his characteristically Victorian missionary sense). It also encourages a proper connection between the tendency to early poetry and Arnold's lectures on "Empedocles on Etna" and "Tristram and Iseult", and those written after 1853, notably "Sohrab and Rustum" and "Balder Dead"; "Rugby Chapel" and "Thyrsis" ("The Scholar Gipsy" is drawn from its pre-1853 position for purposes of comparison with this late companion poem). In Act One, the young Arnold creates vigorous, often consciously historicist, "dramatic" poems in an attempt to objectify the Romanticism to which he is strongly drawn; in Act Two he succumbs unwittingly to its evil influences but undergoes a timely awakening signalled by the 1853 Preface and the withdrawal of "Empedocles on Etna"; and in Act Three he bravely experiments "with redemptive possibilities" suggested by classical models.

Surprisingly, the Arnold emerging from this testing pilgrimage is not, after all, so different from the Arnold we knew before. The framework, schematic though it is, suits Buckler's skill, enabling him to demonstrate forcefully Arnold's early commitment to the business of being a poet and a reformer of poetry, with a sanguine

Uncle Cliff's Lad

Well, cousin, you of the cargo-boats and choppy seas, blue-eyed jangler of gangways, who took on board our old men's wilfulness, their crazy need for foreignness, choosing the swan's way to honour them; the whalerood, this is something between you and me, this is, if you'll believe it, no signed-on ad voyaging; this is ship and sailors, chugging and on course, gulls clamouring, braving all weathers; and this is me, too, after my Master's Ticket; responsible for horizons, walking a liner's bridge for them to approve, earning gold bread for them to be proud, and sailing beyond them.

Matt Simpson

Accompanying the pictures

Patrick O'Connor

Miklós Rózsa

Double Life
224pp. Midge Books. £12.50.
0 85936 209 4

ALAIN LACOMBE

Des Compositeurs pour l'image
602pp. Musique et Promotion, 225
Avenue Charles de Gaulle, 92200
Neuilly-sur-Seine.
2 902660 03 0

Everyone has heard Miklós Rózsa's music - for who has not seen *Spellbound*, *The Lost Weekend*, *Double Indemnity* or, more recently, *Providence*? (If one cannot recall that a film like *Providence* had any music, presumably that is a compliment to the composer.) The best films Rózsa was associated with are melodramas, but he seems also to have gained a huge amount of enjoyment from becoming the composer of biblical Hollywood: *Ben Hur*, *Quo Vadis*, *King of Kings* and *Sodom and Gomorrah*.

Rózsa was born in Budapest. His mother was a pupil of Agazzi and Thoma - both of whom had been pupils of Liszt, whose music was preferred in the Rózsa household. He is amazed now that during his infancy he cannot remember ever hearing his mother play a note of Bach, Beethoven or Mozart. "The flashy and superficial salon music of the Hubay school - Jenő Hubay was the director of the academy - corruptly conditioned the entire musical taste of Budapest." When Rózsa returned to Hungary in 1974 he was surprised to find that nothing had changed and the gypsy bands still played the excerpts from operettas and pseudo-Hungarian folk-music which presumably "Hungarians returning from the West wish to hear". However, the greatest influence on Rózsa's music was his youth in Hungary. In an attempt to follow in the footsteps of his idols, Bartók and Kodály, he tried to collect folk-songs in his school holidays. The experience of meeting the country musicians and Magyar players was more rewarding than the fruit of his efforts: his collection is lost now but, as he admits, he found the texts of no interest; their one-sided nature must have rendered the collection "a curiosity only".

Flaunting the flesh

Marghanita Laski

CHARLES CASTLE

The Folies Bergère
319pp. Methuen, £9.95.
0 413 49470 5

In days when I was really rather too young for it, my father had a habit of taking me to venues where complaisant ladies could be relied on to exclaim that surely he never had a daughter as old as I! It was on such an excursion that we went together to the Folies Bergère, and there the *grande vedette* invited him on to the stage to be her *jeune premier* of the evening. I forget who took me back to the hotel, but it was not Daddy. What I saw, I learn now from Charles Castle, was the show in what were, still, its great days. Its singularity had emerged in the 1860s from the pulchritudinous *cafés chantants* and its name, *Folies*, from *folle*, Fr. 'feverish', a house in a leafy grove - where, presumably, there were goings-on. *Bergère* is from a nearby street-name.

The Folies Bergère was in its early years simply the French equivalent of the English music-hall of the period, a succession of acts, some funny, some spectacular, some daring. The first true revue at the *Place aux Femmes*, Make Way for the Young. There have always been wits and comics at the Folies: Chaplin played there, and Fernandel, but it was not these that brought it to the fore. It was, of course, the (almost)

Rózsa graduated from the Leipzig Conservatory in 1927, at the time that his first compositions were published by Breitkopf and Härtel. Shortly afterwards, encouraged by his teachers he wrote a long symphony. He played this score to Furtwängler, Bruno Walter and Pierre Monteux, all of whom turned it down but all of whom promised to play a shorter piece if he could produce one.

What Rózsa calls his "double life" began in Paris. To make money he began to supply tunes for recording by Pathé to be played during the intermission at film performances for which he took the pseudonym Nic Tomay. One song, "Bobby Chéri", even had a published success. It was Arthur Honegger who, after they gave a joint recital at the Salle Debussy in December 1934, introduced Rózsa to the idea of film scores, as opposed to the mood music or foxtrots he had known until then. Shortly afterwards the director Jacques Feyder invited Rózsa to improvise some "excited crowd music" one day after tea.

Feyder managed to get him engaged as composer on his next film, *Knight without Armour*, which Alexander Korda was producing in England with Marlene Dietrich and Robert Donat. Rózsa was no more successful at composing a song for Dietrich than Kurt Weill was to be in the 1940s - she remained faithful to the music of Friedrich Hollaender, the composer of *The Blue Angel*, and rejected Rózsa's lullaby. Graham Greene however, in his review of the film in *Night and Day*, gave the score high praise, without mentioning Rózsa's name: "There is one sequence in *Knight without Armour* which should take its place among the classic moments of the screen... all aboard for Petrograd" brings the Englishman from the waiting-room to an avenue of empty line and station master striding beside an imaginary express repeating his mad parrot cry, while the soundtrack grinds with his proud and gleeful dream."

That Rózsa was a Hungarian naturally proved an advantage with the Kordas, although it was said that Alexander Korda had a notice in his office which read "It is not enough to be Hungarian to get a job here - you have to have talent too." When the Korda empire moved to Hollywood Rózsa went with them and has stayed ever since. The luck continued - he was the first composer to have a film-score

recorded for the gramophone - his *Young Book* music, with a narration by the child star Sabu - and when his *Theme Variations and Finale* was performed by the New York Philharmonic at Carnegie Hall an indisposed Bruno Walter was replaced by a young unknown making his conducting début - Leonard Bernstein.

If Rózsa feels any disappointment in his double career when his original ideals are considered (although the number of his serious compositions is tiny compared with his vast cinematic output) he does not express it. "The stubborn part of my character has never changed. I want to compose music and that is what I have done, and there is nothing else I can do", he concludes.

Alain Lacombe's sturdy volume *Des Compositeurs pour l'image* is a listing

Teaching the voice

Alfred Alexander

JEROME HINES

Great Singers on Great Singing
356pp. Gollancz, £9.95.
0 573 03246 4

Great Singers on Great Singing offers an entirely new approach to vocal technique. Some singers seem to acquire their technique on their own, with greater or lesser effort, while others seem to learn from one, or from a whole succession of teachers. Vocal technique is a controversial no man's land between the science of laryngology and the physical tricks of singing, and though countless textbooks on the subject exist, only one (Manuel Garcia's *Traité complet du chant* of 1847) is held in anything akin to universal esteem; all others are regarded by a very few singers as bibles to be sworn by, while the rest dismiss them as charlatan's nonsense.

Jerome Hines (Robert Link Heinz) was born in 1921 in Hollywood, where he studied mathematics; but aware of his enormously loud bass voice, he devoted himself to singing after a successful début in 1941. British audiences may remember him at Glyndebourne, or at the Edinburgh Festival of 1953. He sang mainly at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York where he holds the record of having taken bass roles for thirty-seven consecutive seasons.

Every singer encounters difficulties with his voice at times and this happened to Hines in 1971. Rudolf Bing, the director of the Opera House, dropped him from the roster for the next season and Hines felt it

Subordinating the ego

Michael Baker

JAMES FOX

Comeback: An Actor's Direction
151pp. Hodder and Stoughton, £5.95.
0 340 27733 5

Many of James Fox's admirers must have been bewildered by the news in 1971 that he was turning his back on film acting and joining an evangelical Christian sect called the Navigators. His decision deprived the cinema of one of its most watchable British talents. In this book Fox tells us how his conversion took place and why, ten years later, he decided to return to acting.

The greater part of *Comeback* deals with his life up to the moment of spiritual crisis. It is a modest, straightforward account which reads at times like an old-fashioned morality tale. Well-bred, golden-haired English public-schoolboy has meteoric rise to stardom in films; He takes the familiar road to Hollywood where he is initiated into the mixed blessings of the psychodrama. He meets the

French composers for the screen (the talks only - it does not include scores composed to accompany silent movies, although it is fascinating to learn, in the introduction, that Saint-Saëns composed music for the first "classic" French film - *L'Assassinat du Duc de Guise*). What is missing, though it would make the book half as long again, is a cross-reference index of film titles so that one could find out what composer worked on what film rather than vice versa.

As well as Honegger the other members of Les Six all composed film scores - Auric has been the most prolific, from *Le Sang d'un Poète* in 1930, working as recently as 1975, and having to his credit films as diverse as *A Nous la Liberté*, *Orphée* and *Passport to Pimlico*. The book also lists scores by Milhaud, Tailleferre, Poulenc (for Anouilh's *Le Voyageur sans Bagage*,

mandatory to review his vocal technique. He became a "health nut" which rejuvenated his tired and ailing vocal cords" and also sought, and obtained, advice from friends and colleagues. In 1977, Hines hit on the idea of publishing a text-book based on interviews with thirty-eight colleagues whom he had asked for details of their technique. Together with a short chapter about himself and his wife, and interviews with a few "hangers-on", they form the core of this book. Each interview is prefaced by a biography of a few lines, in the mode of a theatre programme. All the interviews, varying in length from one to twelve pages, end with a punch-line or a witticism, an effort difficult to sustain without an allergy response in the reader. Some of the interviews were obtained over the telephone; most were tape recorded and transcribed; the English language suffered some serious mauling in the process.

Vocal technique is customarily grouped under the headings of breath control, sound-inception, passages (or registers), timbre and colour, "placing" of the voice and vocal exercises. Hines's questions followed those lines and varied little from one communicant to the other: "Tell me about your breathing. What do you mean by support? How about your diaphragm? What do you mean by an open throat? Do you associate it with yawning? Do you lift the soft palate? What about placement? Do you use your lips in singing? What do you do with your tongue? Do you use your chest voice? Have you to face a passage between chest and head voice? How about the higher passage? Are your studies based on scales?"

The answers vary greatly, and are often contradictory. Physiological and

for which, oddly, Milhaud wrote the incidental music for the stage) and Durey, whom the author rightly describes as "le plus discret du groupe".

The music for the most famous French film of all, *Les Enfants du Paradis*, was composed by Maurice Thiriet (Prévert's habitual musical collaborator, Joseph Kosma, only provided music for Baptiste's mind) and it is perhaps significant that the celebrated composers have added their names to the greatest films; it is the lack of film music to remain as anonymous as possible, but, as Miklós Rózsa himself writes in the introduction to Lacombe's book: "La musique fait pour le cinéma aura souvent eu le mérite d'épouser les exigences du professionnalisme le plus sérieux sans jamais renoncer à son originalité."

anatomical terms are bandied about with total disregard for their proper meaning; on the diaphragm alone, the book contains enough statements to make a hundred candidates fail their second MB. Some of the answers, however, are very poignant: Plácido Domingo (tenor): "Somebody to go to... regularly to study formally... I never had that." Cornell MacNeil (baritone): "Placement is nonsense, utter, complete crap." Robert Peters (soprano): "I never think of the larynx. I've seen pictures of what the larynx looks like and it confuses me." Rosa Ponselle (soprano): "I never formally studied voice." Mari Talvela (bass): "We have only very few truths in singing. Many teachers will make it more complicated. Our truth is, in my opinion, you have to learn by yourself. Try and try it again."

Everyone seriously interested in singing must feel grateful to Jerome Hines not only for having compiled this interesting book but also for scrupulous fairness in recording the opinions which do not fit his ideas. No one can learn singing from it, but the very muddle of replies will help to clarify the student's mind, and confirm that although vocal technique must be learnt, it can hardly be taught. To put the proproceptic sensation encountered in singing into words which mean something is someone else is not only very difficult but possibly pointless. What is essential is that, with the aid of "that second pair of ears" and of sympathetic guidance from friend or teacher, vocal technique is intuitively acquired through a laborious and sustained effort. "There are no good books or teachers about", Richard Tauber was found of saying, "but some very good pupils!"

Rolling Stones and Jane Fonda, rents a beach house on Malibu and has the back of his head photographed for *Vogue*. He also "turns on" and "drops out". But then he begins to have self-doubts. Stardom has brought only an inner emptiness. "The real saviour is loss of self; subordination of ego to - something bigger", he confides to his diary in the appropriate psycho-language of the day. Redemption finally comes in the unlikely person of Berni, a mail-order catalogue designer whom he meets in Blackpool while touring in repertory. Berni knows his Bible and acquaints Fox with the mysteries of "something bigger" in an impressive display of chapter and verse. Marriage to a fellow-evangelical follows and the former idol settles down in suburban Sheffield as a Phoenias salesman.

Fox is now back in front of the cameras, though his account does not entirely explain why. There is an impression that he was not altogether at ease in the role of urban missionary. Perhaps, as he admits, he simply wanted to get back to doing something he was good at. He is still a Christian and his sincerity is not in doubt. In his

BIBLIOGRAPHY

HELEN WALLIS (Editor)

The Maps and Text of the Boke of the Geography presented by Jean Rotz to Henry VIII now in the British Library
96pp. with 15 double-page colour plates. Maggs Brothers, 50 Berkeley Square, London W1, for the Roxburghe Club. £575.
095066 4103

On August 22, 1770, Captain Cook, working his way back up the east coast of Australia after his first crossing of the Pacific Ocean, wrote in his journal: "The Eastern Coast from the Latitude of 38° South down to this place I am confident was never seen or visited by any European before us". Only sixteen years later, Alexander Dalrymple, who had his own reasons (he had failed to obtain command of a similar voyage of exploration) to belittle Cook's achievements, first described a "very curious MS., painted on Parchment with the Dauphin's arms". Made for Henri II just before he succeeded to the throne of France in 1547, it had passed to the great collector Edward Harley, 2nd Earl of Oxford. It was later acquired by Sir Joseph Banks, who lent it to Dalrymple, who noted:

It contains much lost knowledge: Kerguelen's Land seems plainly denoted: the East Coast of New Holland, as we name it, is expressed with some curious circumstances of correspondence to Captain Cook's MS. ... So that we may say with Solomon "There is nothing new under the Sun".

With these words, Dalrymple inaugurated two centuries of learned debate about the extent of sixteenth-century discovery in the East-Indies, including some part of the coast of Australia. This debate will now take on a new dimension with the publication of a document of singular importance. The *Boke of Geography*, or world atlas, of John Rotz, the most substantial, most beautiful and largest of all depictions of the world as extended by the voyages made in the half-century after Columbus's discovery of America.

John Rotz was really John, son of David Rosa; himself born in Dieppe, about 1505, he came of a Scotch family, apparently from Balmogown, near Tain in Easter Ross. The curious spelling of his name is evidently the result of Englishmen trying to come to terms with the guttural French rendering of the sibilant Scots pronunciation of Ross: in France he was called "Ros" or "Rose". He was proud of his Scotch ancestry and later used it to substantiate his claim to nobility: some Scots forms survive in the English text preceding his atlas.

What was this second-generation refugee doing in Dieppe? The route that led from Scotland to France was already well trodden in the fifteenth century. The University of Paris was by tradition the Mecca of Scotch education; and the royal Scotch guard had been immortalized in *Quentin Durward*. Dieppe, equally was a magnet for maritime Scots, so much so that in 1520, the rue des Weez was renamed the rue d'Ecosse. But the Scots were not the only aliens drawn to Dieppe at the turn of the fifteenth century. Normandy, especially its twin cities, Rouen, and Dieppe, had become again an area of international importance. On the cultural map of Europe, the coastal trade between the Low Countries and Spain and the Mediterranean was now augmented by the voyages across the Atlantic or even further abroad. The Kingdom of this time (1481) was Jean Ango, 3201, "merchant, customs officer, naval officer, chief of corsairs", but, more than all these, the most important of his time. Long before Drake and Hawkins, earned the English a bad name in the Iberian Peninsula, Ango's privateers had sailed in Brazil, pursued Magellan's fleet, captured Spanish and Portuguese ships, the Portuguese in 1527 by hanging Fleury, a Portuguese captain, when they

found him a wealthy and successful

An ancient mariner's projection

Nicolas Barker

city, well able to attract strangers. Chief among these were the Florentine expatriates Alderotti Brunelleschi; the four Rucellai brothers, nephews of Lorenzo the Magnificent, of whom Zannobi was an associate of Giovanni da Verrazzano, the most famous Florentine voyager in France; and the great-nephews of Columbus's correspondent Paolo Toscanelli. There were even some Portuguese: one Antoine sailed with the Parmentier brothers to the East Indies in 1529, Jean Alfonse of Saintonge was a contemporary (and perhaps source) of

ships, accompanied by Antoine the Portuguese, a Malay interpreter, Jean Musson, Maître Jean Sasi dit le Grand Peintre, and Pierre Crignon an astronomer. It is possible that young John Rotz went with them, though his own words on the matter are equivocal. The voyage went via Guinea and the Cape to Madagascar, where it lost three men in a fight with the natives, and then on to Sumatra. There the Parmentier brothers died of typhoid. What happened next is not clear: there was a debate among the survivors about whether to return or go

January 15, 1529/30, "moy estant sur la mer", in the Indian Ocean, he may be quoting Crignon rather than recounting his own experience.

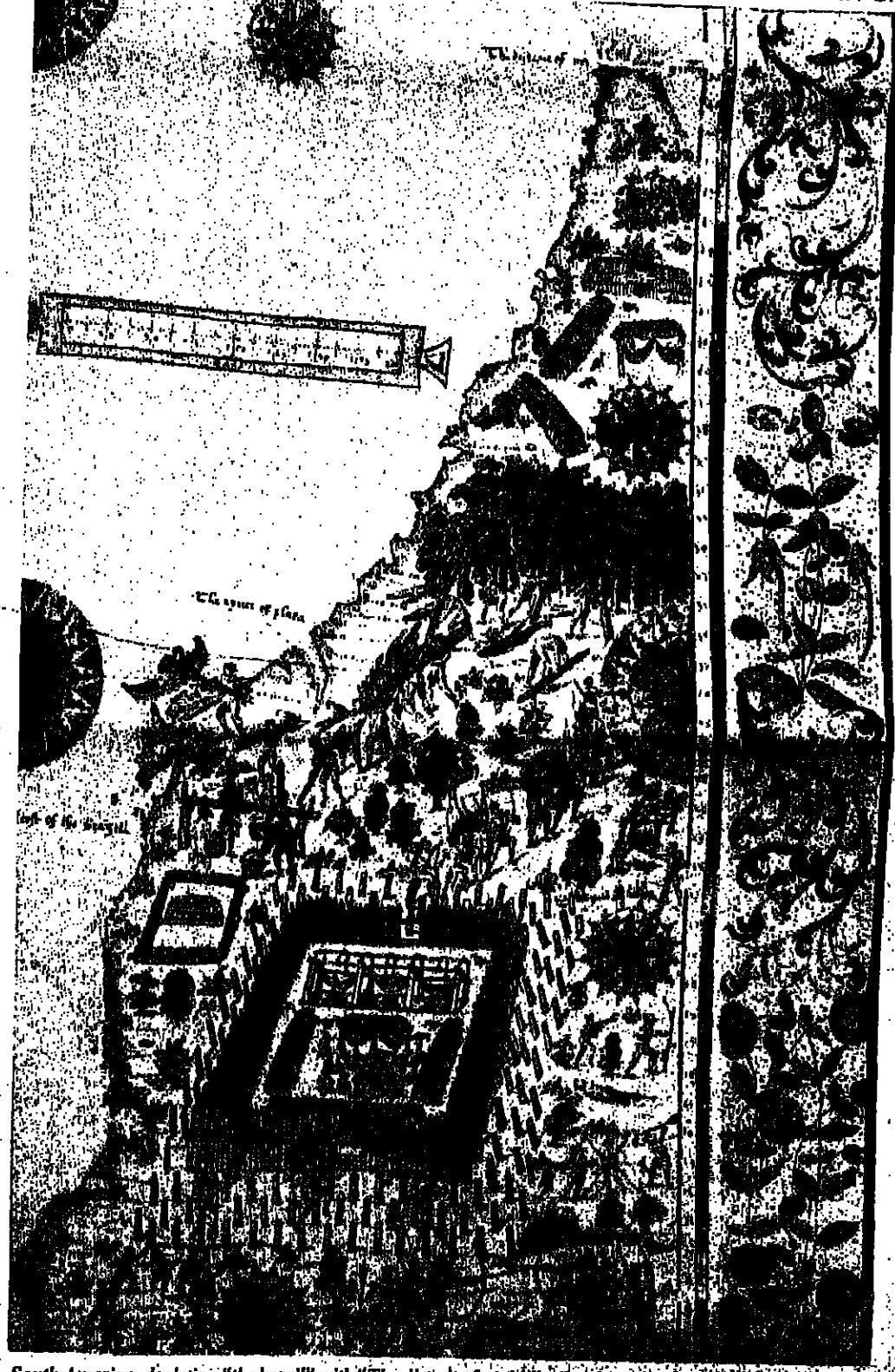
Rotz seems to have spent most of the 1530s sailing out of Dieppe. He was master of the Katherine in 1534 and was robbed by Dutch pirates of a cargo en route from Rouen to Dover. In 1539 (his words are unequivocal here), he went on a voyage to Guinea and Brazil; he probably set out then not from Dieppe but from Rouen, whence La Madeleine, of Nicolas Guincestre (Winchester?) sailed for Brazil and

that new wealth from the dissolution of the monasteries made possible. Strength at home required activity on the borders, in Ireland and on the fortification of the Channel ports. Above all, it demanded a strong fleet, and this became Henry's main concern. High wages enticed many Frenchmen to cross the Channel, and was one of these. He was probably a member of the Rouen bookselling family, and with his nautical interests may have known Rotz and smoothed his path to England with his wife and family. In Michaelmas 1542 Rotz was paid £20, six months' salary in arrears; at the same time Holbein's annual retainer was £30, and the difference reflects the importance set on Rotz's special skill.

Whether he brought his great book with him or merely the material for it is hard to say. The beginning and end must have been done in England, on the evidence of text and royal emblems. The decoration of the map pages with their rather old-fashioned Flemish flower and leaf patterns rather suggests a model like the books that Edward IV brought back from Bruges. Splendid though its appearance was (its huge pages measure 24 x 15 inches), Rotz was very well aware that this was a secondary consideration, to him as to the king, compared with its informational content. This was divided into two parts, the text on the technique of navigation and the maps illustrating the opportunities open to the bold navigator. Wisely, he began with the first and, before presenting his great "Boke", he introduced it with a smaller but handsomely illustrated "Traicté des différences du compas aymant". This dealt with Rotz's secret weapon, the "cadrant différentiel", a combined magnetic compass and universal dial, with a set of astronomer's rings mounted above. It was, in effect, one of the earliest compasses of variation.

Whether this was made or used by Rotz is not evident (as drawn it would have been difficult to use), but it provided a practical demonstration of a theoretical consideration that dominated his navigational technique, the effect of magnetic variation. The further explorers ventured east or west from European waters the greater the difference they found between courses set according to the magnetic compasses on board and the actual landfall achieved. The cause of this, the magnetic variation east or west between a geographic and magnetic north, was well known, but its exact nature was not understood and no solution for navigators had been reached. Rotz proposed to use the "diametral line", or line joining points of no observable magnetic variation, commonly thought to pass through the Azores and joining the North and South Poles, as his prime meridian in determining longitudes. He was under the impression (as were his contemporaries) that magnetic variation followed a determinable increase east and west of this line and that thus one could work out longitudes according to the variation observed. For this his "cadrant différentiel" was essential as the means for determining the variation.

The charts he drew, however, were plane charts using a rhumb-line network taking no account of the variations. To compensate graphically for the observable difference in latitudes caused by magnetic variation Rotz used the usual convention of additional latitude scales; for example, on his North Atlantic chart the left-hand scale passing through Labrador is marked 74°N, while its equivalent in the right-hand or eastern margin is 78°N. Thus an apparently westerly course from England would achieve a landfall a few degrees south of the expected point owing to the westerly variation from geographic north. Whether Rotz invented this theory, or whether he got it too from Crignon, whose lost "Perte de Cosmographie" dealt with a similar "ligne de direction", his exposition was the first of its kind to survive. It was not a problem that seems to have interested the Spanish or Portuguese navigators until later: it was first published by the Dutch navigator



South America, depicting "the Brazil" with "The distrait of magellan" at the top, from Rotz's original MS.

Rotz, and one of the famous Homem family of cartographers became cosmographer royal to Charles IX. Even more important than the Portuguese themselves, the senior and most far-ranging of voyagers, were their maps, obtained by means then and since secret. The information from these sources, extracted in the teeth of the avowed Portuguese *politica de segredo*, is a permanent current in the strategy and tactics of English and French interloping in the territories claimed for Spain and Portugal by the Treaty of Tordesillas in 1494.

The voyage of Jean and Raoul Parmentier set off at the high point of Dieppe's prosperity. In 1527, Jean Parmentier, poet and navigator, had taken a leading part in a great fête or "Mômerie", held to celebrate the newly made peace between England and France, symbolized by the epic figures of King Arthur and Charlemagne. In alliance against the Emperor Charles V of Spain, He now set out with his brother Raoul in two

on to "Java", but the only certainty is that they returned via southern Africa, the "torres des Cannibales", which he was soon to depict so vividly. Rotz might have remained at Dieppe but for a change in the balances of international politics. Portuguese pressure on Francis I caused a severe cut-back in Anglo's activities, and the main drift of royal patronage was directed to Saint-Malo and Jacques Cartier's Canadian enterprises. It was this that prompted Rotz to gather together the sources at his disposal to prepare a book, "contenant toute hydrographie ou science marine" for François I. It had to be something special for he knew the king to be "assez Remply de cartes marines selon la maniere vulgaire". In the event, he was frustrated, perhaps because in 1539 François had succeeded in engaging a Portuguese cartographer, João Pacheco. Rotz may have spent two years in Paris before abandoning hope in this direction.

1540 saw the fall of Thomas Cromwell, and with it Henry VIII was free to pursue the expansionist policies